ZERO

GAMES ST AMIGA PC CONSOLES

ISSUE THREE JANUARY

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OVER 50 HOT CHRISTMAS GAMES REVIEWED AND PREVIEWED

F29 RETALIATOR

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Need to catch up in a hurry? Well, just one press of your Turbo Button will leave your eyes in the back of your head!

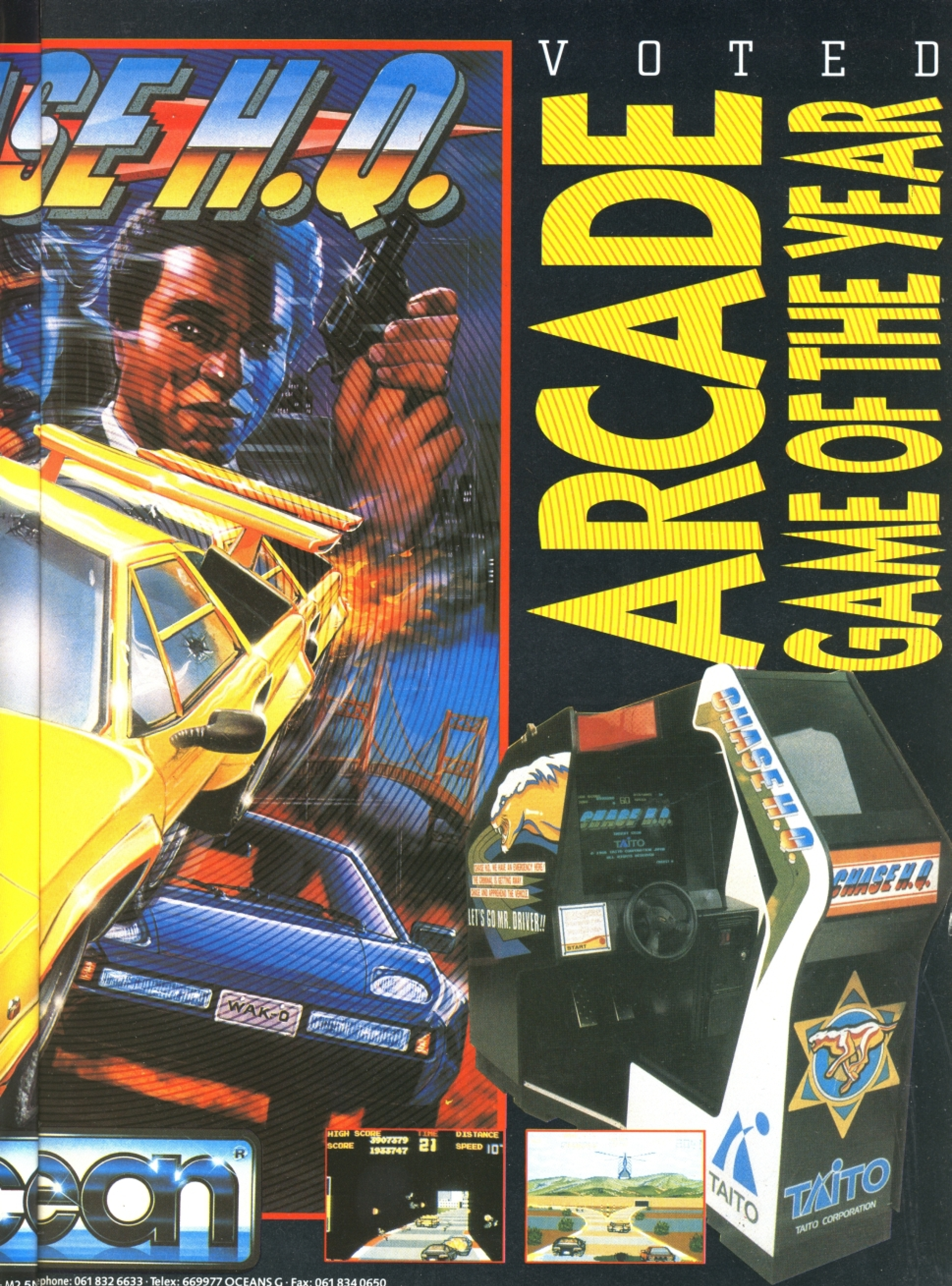


BARRELLING THROUGH THE CITY STREETS,

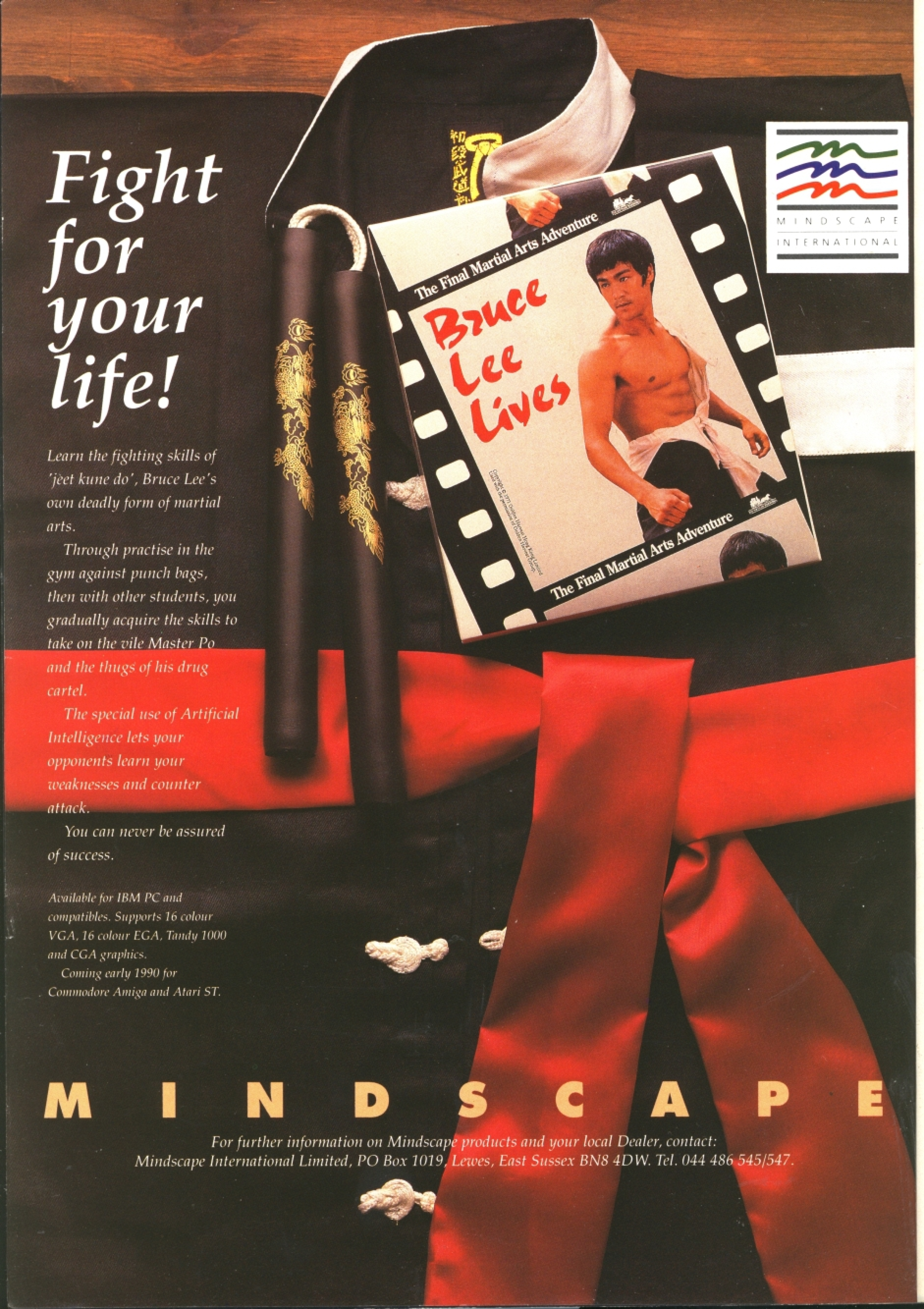
along the roughest of dirt tracks and through busy tunnels – if you can hold the line! The low life can run, but they can't hide ... **CHASE H.Q.**

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TIME 21
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Through practise in the gym against punch bags, then with other students, you gradually acquire the skills to take on the vile Master Po and the thugs of his drug cartel.
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ZERO 3







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Your chance to enter and **WIN £50,000 worth of prizes**! Look for the pull-out compo card between pages 66 and 67 NOW!

GAMES LIST

Need to find a game in a hurry? Every single one is listed here in our ZERO quick reference guide.

REVIEWS

PREVIEWS

ZERO
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Austerlitz

COMING SOON ON ATARI ST, AMIGA & PC



Get ready to experience the Horror and Glory that was the battle of Austerlitz!

The date is the 2nd December 1805. The place is a few miles east of Brunn in the province of Moldavia. Ranged across the barren Pratzen heights are the forces of the Austro–Russian army. Facing them, between Santon Hill and the River Bosenitz is Napoleon's Grand Armée. The greatest battle ever to be fought by France's 'Little Corporal' is about to begin.

Using a unique system developed by Dr. Peter Turcan, AUSTERLITZ gives you the opportunity to relive that battle. The battlefield is represented on your screen in incredible 3D graphics. You can actually observe your troops as they move and fight their way across the terrain.

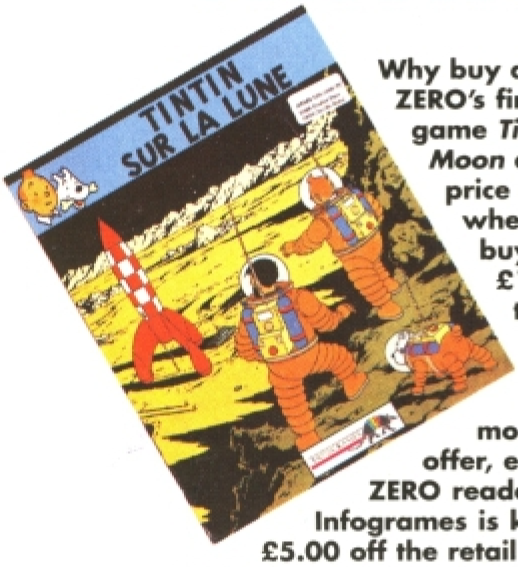
Your orders are written out for your Corps Commanders, just as they would have been at the actual battle, and then relayed by messenger riders. Of course, orders might be reinterpreted, ignored, or even fail to get to their anticipated destination, and even if they do arrive, it all takes time – exactly the sort of problems faced by Napoleon and the Russian Czar Alexander on that cold winter day.

Play* AUSTERLITZ, *and take up the challenge that gives you the chance to rewrite the history books!

PSS

Oi!

SAVE FIVE QUID OFF TINTIN!!!



Why buy a copy of ZERO's first cover game *Tintin On The Moon* at the retail price of £19.99, when you can buy it for £14.99 by taking advantage of this rather brill money saving offer, exclusive to ZERO readers?

Infogrames is knocking £5.00 off the retail price of all 16-bit formats of *Tintin On The Moon* especially for ZERO readers for a limited period of six months only. If you want to get a copy of *Tintin* at this exclusive knock-down price, simply fill in the details on the voucher below, send a cheque or postal order for £14.99 made payable to Infogrames Limited and then send your money and voucher (or a photocopy) to ZERO *Tintin* Offer, Infogrames, Mitre House, Abbey Road, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 2RQ. It's a veritable bargain.

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Please send me ☐ copy/ies of *Tintin On The Moon* at the bargain price of £14.99. I would like it on ST ☐ Amiga ☐ format and enclose a cheque/postal order for £14.99 made payable to Infogrames Limited.
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Available to UK readers only. Sorry!

OVERDRIVE AT MICROPROSE



The following prosers: Malcom Hellon, Tim Walter and Adrian Scotney.

After a highly successful year of acquisitions and high quality software, Microprose is gearing up to expand its empire even further in 1990, not least by setting up a UK in-house programming team.

"Previously, all our UK products have been comissioned from freelance programmers, and even the ST and Amiga versions of the Microprose simulations have been written in America," burbled Martin Moth, Public Relations officer for Microprose UK. "But the new team will work at both original software like *Stunt Car Racer* and *RVF* and also on converting the US titles to the ST and Amiga, as programmers over here are much better with those computers. We'll have more say in the development of titles, and also much better simulation software for the ST and Amiga."

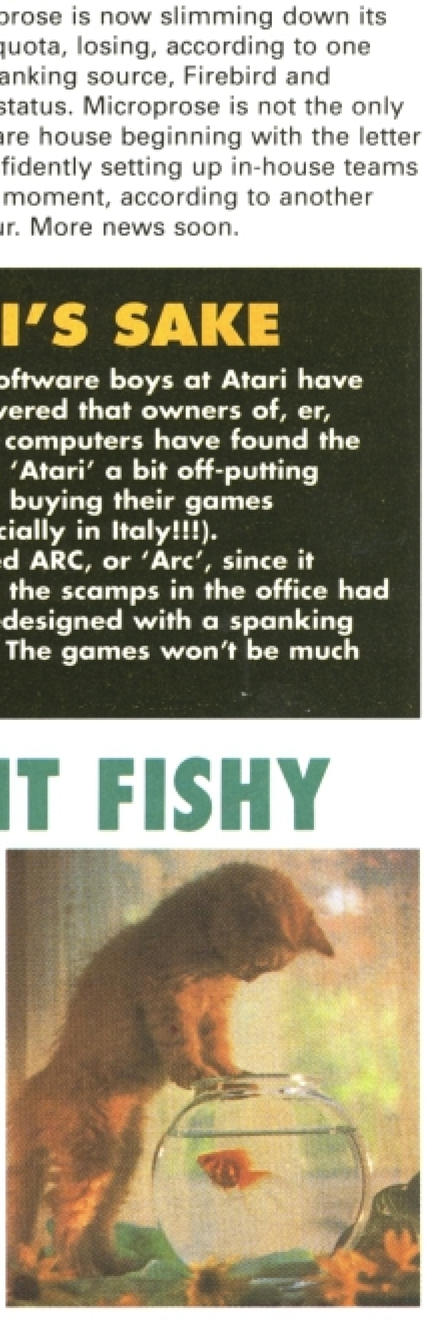
Having got most of the Telecomsoft backlog of releases out of the way, Microprose is now slimming down its label quota, losing, according to one high ranking source, Firebird and Microstatus. Microprose is not the only software house beginning with the letter M confidently setting up in-house teams at the moment, according to another rumour. More news soon.

ARC FOR ATARI'S SAKE

The software boys at Atari have discovered that owners of, er, other computers have found the name 'Atari' a bit off-putting when buying their games (especially in Italy!!!).

So Atari's UK software label is now called ARC, or 'Arc', since it doesn't really stand for anything, although the scamps in the office had a few ideas. All the packaging has been redesigned with a spanking new logo, and this is what it all looks like. The games won't be much different though.

SOUNDS A BIT FISHY



Electronic Zoo will be releasing, wait for it, a goldfish simulation. Yep, there you'll be, flapping around helplessly from bowl to bowl: dodging the cat, avoiding the killer algae, swimming past the monkey (monkey!???). Evidently all human life will be there, and quite a bit more besides. And the game is called... er... *Chomp*.

Still, *Chomp* isn't entirely Electronic Zoo's responsibility, since it's licensed from US company Cosmi. Boss Stewart Bell could barely wait to tell ZERO the exciting news (well, we rang him) that the firm has signed up the veteran Cosmi – responsible for golden oldies such as *Caverns Of Kafka*, *Slinky*, and other immortal clashes from the ashes of yesteryear- to release all its forthcoming titles in the UK.



HUGE THINGIES

Level 9's HUGE games are getting bigger and bigger. The Austins have been playing things close to their chest since abandoning the magic runes and the trolls of Tharg for ever, but it looks as though one of the new non-adventure games (developed using their system HUGE) will be called *Champion Of The Raj*. "We wanted to call it *Defender Of The Raj* actually, but we thought Cinemaware might be a bit put out if we did," said Pete Austin. They're also releasing *The Wild West Game*, which is fairly self-explanatory – both titles won't be out until around Easter time.

THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING!

After the worldwide success of *Tetris* (still number one after 17 weeks in the Papua-New Guinea Full Price charts), commie coders are in vogue, and you only have to say "Da" before some eager software house is offering you 501s by the crateful.

Now Herbert Wright and his modestly titled company Universe has jumped on the ox cart, signing up the Great Pavlovski and his "potentially massive" game *Lupi*. "Actually we'll have to change the name because I think it means something dodgy in German," mutters Herbert. The fact that it's crap probably has nothing whatsoever to do with it.



DRAGON BREATH

Palace's New Year hopeful, *Dragon's Breath*, which up to three people will be able to play, is to have all the usual 16-bit elements, namely strategy bits, arcade bits, trading bits and role-playing bits, thrown in. There's a long and involved link between *Dragon's Breath* and *Populous*, which we'll let Pete Stone of Palace tell in his own words, since it is all rather complicated. Over to you, Pete.

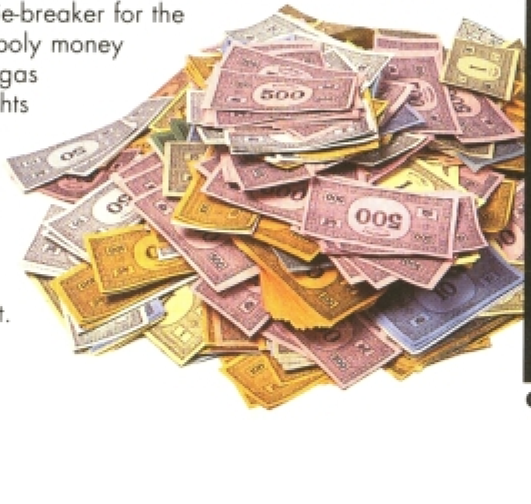


"Well, the idea behind *Dragon's Breath* was conceived before *Populous* and some of *Populous*' ideas sprang from the original idea for *Dragon's Breath*, but then they both evolved and became quite separate games.

"Andrew Bailey the *Dragon's Breath* programmer is with Bullfrog, Simon Hunter who did the graphics, but he didn't do *Populous* and David Hanlon did the music on both." All clear? If not, write to Palace, not us.

THE SILICA SHOP ST/AMIGA COMPO WINNAHS

Right you can all stop ringing in now, 'cos here they are, the six winners of the Brian Trubshaw Competition which ran in the pilot issue of ZERO. We had hundreds of correct entries so we had to resort to the tie-breaker for the person who shamelessly sent in the largest Monopoly money bribes to pick the final six to win the STs and Amigas supplied by SILICA SHOP/ZERO. So after 23 nights solid of counting dosh the winners are: **C.V. Pedder** from Bishops Storford, Herts (who sent in the largest bribe of £12,100,188); **Adam Aldous** from Norwich Norfolk; **Lakhvir Rehal** from Woolwich, London; **Alan Ward** from Colwyn Bay, Clwyd; **Simeon Pearl** from London and **Steve Carter** from Gillingham, Kent. A sparkling new ST or Amiga will be winging its way to the winners just in time for Christmas.



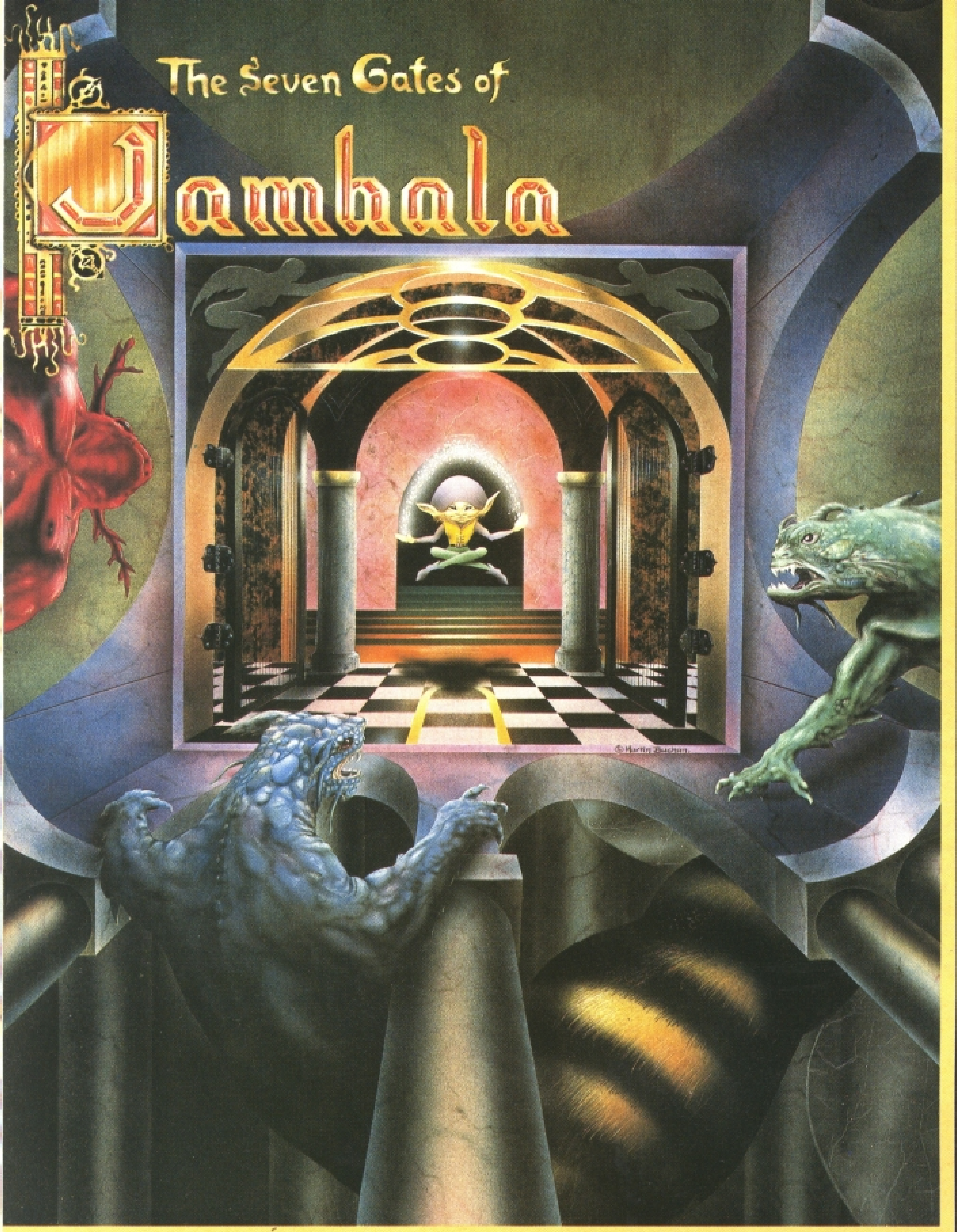


ON THE GRAPEVINE

Dom and Mark, our favourite Domark duo, have recently been the subject of some interest to hacks from that esteemed defender of truth, honesty and big whammies *News Of The Screws*. What!!? Dom and Mark caught in bed with nubile bimbo perhaps? **Strip Dominic Wheatley Poker**, perchance? Rude goings on with the vibrating steering wheel in the **Hard Drivin'** cabinet? No such luck. Apparently the raunchy rag is doing a feature on computer games near to Christmas, and getting some celeb (inasmuch as any cast member of *Brookside* can be a 'celeb') to play the games. That's what the Doms told us anyway, but we wouldn't be surprised if they are 'exposed' in some fashion in a future issue.

- Over at Ocean, where they sign up six licensing deals before breakfast, excitement is running at fever-pitch over the acquisition of **Battle Command**, Realtime's follow-up to **Carrier Command**, which features a tank rather than all that flying about malarkey. Then there's **Secret Agent**, the Data East coin-op, coming to a computer screen near you in the next few months, and looking even further ahead, Ocean will be serving up the sequel to **F29 Retaliator**, about which Ocean's Gary Bracey is uncharacteristically vague. "Er, yes, well, it's the sequel to **F29 Retaliator ... F29 Retaliator II**? Couldn't tell you, I'm afraid." Thanks, Gary.
- One 'number two' which is a definite, is Firebird's **Rick Dangerous II**, for which the monickers are going on the dotted line. The little black squares and flags are slowly being filled in for Rainbird's **UMS II** as well. Expect **Datastorm II** and **Lancaster II** sometime next year, and also, following the success of **Xenon II**, a second Mirrorsoft game featuring a soundtrack by Bomb The Bass.
- US Gold has told us of its new departure, namely non-licenced software The programming pixies have, apparently, been beavering away on several original titles, the first to be released in the New Year being **Knights Of The Crystallion**, a sort of role playing jobbie, by all accounts. Well, by the one account, anyway.
- Everyone has heard that 32 percent of Spectrum owners have a CD player, haven't they? Well following this earth shattering 'definitive research' the munchkins at Code Masters have put out a CD of 30 of their greatest hits for 8-bit machines, plus the cable to connect your CD player to your computer. Why the hell anyone with a CD player would ever buy a Codies game is beyond us, but there you go. Let **ZERO** be the very first to tell you however, that the Kindergarten crew plan to produce a 16-bit version for Christmas 1990. So long as Code Masters has written 30 16-bit games by next Christmas, that is.

Oi! written and compiled by Christina Erskine





ATARI ST





AMIGA



THE SEVEN GATES OF JAMBALA

Escape from the caves of Jambala in this fun-filled jump and run game with stunning graphics and sound.

You will face a labyrinth of caves which not surprisingly hide a host of inhabitants, good and bad, treasures, puzzles, magic spells and many hidden screens.

If you are lucky enough to find all 7 pieces of the missing magic wand and reach the last city you will finally have the chance to escape from the labyrinth.

A fascinating voyage of discovery through an unknown world of fantasy.

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AVAILABLE ON
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WARP
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ATARI ST £19.99
WARP
Destroy the energy stations in this action filled shoot-em-up. At the end of each completed level you must guide your craft through the warp tunnel, a 3D flight sequence, to reach the next, higher level. You will need strength, planning and strategy in order to find the maps, energy dumps as well as a host of other features.
Fantastic sound and original animation sequences.
ATARI ST
AMIGA
THALION
GRANDSLAM
THALION
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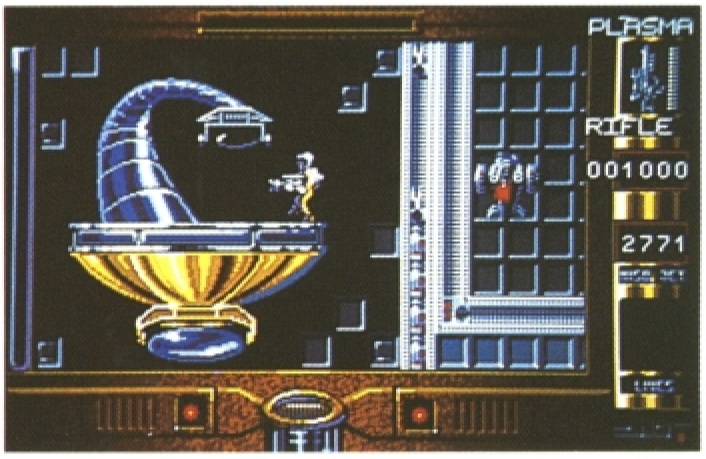
PREVIEWS

Greedier for games than stuffing and turkey? Then check out what you'll be playing through the bleak midwinter when your pals are out building snowmen and getting frostbite, in the ZERO previews pages.

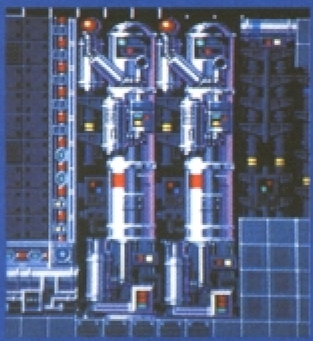
DAN DARE III

Well, well, well. It's *Dan Dare III.* But what on earth happened to Dan Dare's I and II? They don't exist, that's what – well they do exist actually but only in 8-bit land (i.e. on the Spectrums and Commodore 64s). So, for 16-bit owners, this is actually *Dan Dare I.* (Confused? We're not).

So who exactly is Dan Dare? He's a 'pilot of the future', that's who. Unfortunately for Dan though, he was conceived way back in 1950, when everybody's idea of a 'futuristic' spacecraft was a giant vacuum-cleaner attatched by string to a Massey Fergusson tractor engine. In this miracle of future technology, he got to fly around the solar system taking 'pops' at his arch enemy, the Mekon (leader of The Treens – an alien race that lives on Venus). Dan eventually found himself out of comission, however and was frozen in suspended animation for ages – but now he's out again and Virgin Mastertronic has got its programming hands on him. The game's due out on ST and Amiga but we had a pre-release gander at the ST version. Here's what's been done.



Oh no, it's a gigantic teapot from Hell. Either that or some sort of molecular transporter. (ST screen)



Look two pipes on a wall. (Amiga screen)



There's trouble at hat shop. (Amiga screen)



This one won't fare any better. (Amiga screen)



This one's already got a hat. (Amiga screen)

It seems that Mr Mekon has captured Mr Dare and is holding him captive inside his giant satellite thingy which orbits Venus. At the start, Dan has just escaped from his cell and is about to try to escape from the satellite itself and return to good old Blighty (or Earth, at least). He's been lucky enough to locate a little 'on-board' spaceship to take him there, but guess what? The spaceship hasn't got any blinking fuel. Dan's got to find some.

This fuel, in jerry-cans, is deposited willy-nilly over the five levels of the satellite. As you can imagine, getting Dan's mits on these much needed items isn't so easy. The interior layout of the satellite just so happens to be about 12,000 times more complex than Hampton Court Maze – but unlike Hampton Court Maze, it's populated by a whole host of alien nasties (the Treens) who are trying to kill you. Luckily for Dan (and therefore you), he's in possession of a nifty piece of fire-power: a gun which has three levels of effectiveness, as in R-Type (the longer you hold down the fire-button, the more intense the blast).

To help make Dan more powerful, there are computer terminals scattered about. Log onto one of these and you'll be able to buy yourself some rather natty weapons – as long as you've killed enough Treens and have the dosh. Also scattered about are teleport terminals. These, as, allow you to, erm, 'teleport' through the levels. In *Dan Dare III*, the idea is to kill everything that moves, collect everything that isn't welded onto the sides of the satellite, teleport to every single available location and you should soon be in the position to blast off, earthward bound. Did we say soon? Well, the game's quite big, so maybe that's a trifle optimistic.



A Mekon Sunday driver. (ST screen)

All this goes together to make *Dan Dare III* look like it's going to be a thoroughly absorbing, very mappable shoot 'em up with the emphasis on three things: (1) action, (2) playability and (3) spaceships with tractor engines that go 'phut, phut, phut'.

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	**Dan Dare III**
PUBLISHER	**Virgin Mastertronic**
PRICE	**ST/Amiga £19.99** **PC £24.99**
FORMAT	**ST/Amiga/PC**
RELEASED	**February**

NEBULUS 2



After the absolutely brilliant, astounding *Nebulus 1* comes... Nebulus 8. Well *Nebulus 2* actually. And not before time.

Ol' Pogo (you remember him from *Neb 1*) has bounced back to Nor, ready for action. But this time he's not armed with his pogo stick 'cos he's got a helicopter at his disposal, which is actually pretty useful in a world with barely room to land a Harrier Jump Jet.

Ace programmer John Phillips has come up with another 16 fiendish towers packed with action, slides, ladders, multi-platforms, multi-directional ports... (*Sounds like Castle Rathbone. Ed.*) and basically everything you need to make you give up steam pudding for life.

● Out on both Amiga and ST from Hewson. But you'll have to wait till May though.

HIGHWAY PATROL II

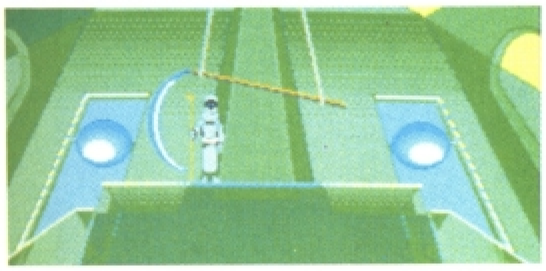
Have you ever felt inclined to grab a microphone and shout "Car 47 calling HQ. Am in pursuit of criminals heading South." You have? Well you need help but while you're sitting in the therapist's waiting room you might try out *Highway Patrol II*, a 3D driving simulator from Infogrames.

Jump into your patrol car and patrol the streets looking for crims. If you spot a target then go hell for leather to head them off. HQ will keep you informed of what's going on, and information will also be displayed on a road map.

High speed chases and nice uniforms, it must be a great life on the force. As the well known saying goes, you're never alone with a truncheon.

● Infogrames will be feeling your collar for £19.95 for ST, PC and Amiga formats later this month. You're nicked son!





LOOM

Great guilds of fire! In the mythical world of *Loom* the Blacksmiths, Glassmakers and Weavers Guilds are the boys in charge.

Bobbin our hero, belongs to the Weavers' guild. (*How did we guess? Ed.*) But all the elders of his guild have gorn off and left him – was it something he said? Anyway, completely fed up of his own company, Bobbin decides to go in search of his elders. Armed only with a distaff which detects and weaves magical spells, Bobbin wanders off on an arcade adventure along the lines of Lucasfilm's previous adventure hit *Indy Adventure*.

The world of *Loom* is so different, that players will be introduced to its lores and customs via a taped drama which comes complete with the game. Apparently professional actors were used to produce the tape. Presumably they all belong to a guild of actors and are all called Larry.

● Amiga and ST versions should be out from Lucasfilm at the same time as Cadbury's cream eggs!

FULL METAL PLANET

First there was *Full Metal Jacket*, a film about the Vietnam war. Everyone was amazed. Then there was *Full Metal Planet*, a computer game about mining and everyone was confused. We thought there was about as much chance of finding ore in a metal planet as there is of finding a job in Liverpool. (Oooh. Bit of politics there.)

Anyway, in *Full Metal Planet* your aim is to dig for ore. If you can't be fagged to dig for ore, you can always swipe it from rival companies. Mine it for yourself if you want, but why bother? It's so much more fun to steal it. And while you're doing that, you might as well blow up your rivals' expensive equipment... well why not? That's what it's there for.

After that it's a case of fire retros and let's get the hell out of here before the Tax Inspectors arrive.

● Out now from Infogrames on ST, Amiga and PC at £24.99.





MYTH

It's no easy life being a hero. You get home from a hard day at the office, slap on a Julie Andrews' Compilation Video and prepare to go all ethereal. Then the phone rings and someone orders you back into the past to save the world by last Tuesday, so off you go to stop that evil god Dameron changing all the good gods to bad.

Fighting your way through different time zones you'll have to deal with the following motley crew: Romans, Greeks, Trolls, Goblins but not thank heavens, singing nuns. This graphic arcade adventure is full of action as well as lots of clever little puzzley bits. Just make sure you have your Greek phrase book and Collins Guide to Mythology before you start playing.

● Legend has it that System 3 will be letting loose the ST and Amiga versions this month at a princely sum of dosh!

ST CHART

1. **POWERDRIFT** Activision
2. **BATMAN** Ocean
3. **PRO TENNIS TOUR** Ubisoft
4. **CONTINENTAL CIRCUS** Virgin
5. **RED STORM RISING** Microprose
6. **HAWAIIAN ODYSSEY** SubLogic
7. **T.V. SPORTS FOOTBALL** Cinemaware
8. **SUPERWONDER BOY** Activision
9. **STUNT CAR RACER** MicroStyle
10. **FAST LANE** Artronic

WARP

Crime eh? It's the only way to make an honest living these days. But what does an honest criminal (i.e you) do when, having stolen the fastest spaceship on Earth, he sees a host of evil Myrons about to blow up the planet? Well you high tale it to safety, don't you? No, unfortunately you don't. Instead you set out to destroy all the Myron power stations before they energise



and blow up the Earth. These stations are spread over 10 fast and furious levels of 16 directional scrolling linked by 3D warp tunnels. Good lord, all this trouble just to pull the plug out.

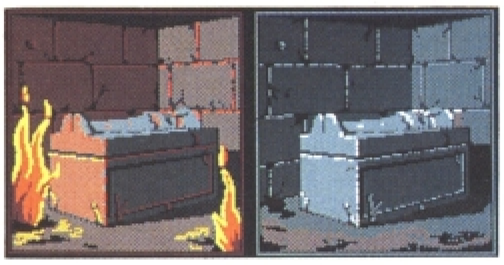
● Grandslam's offering should be out by the time you read this on St and Amiga at £19.99.

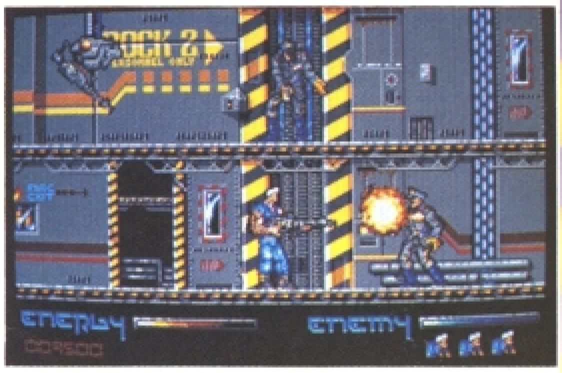
DEMON'S TOMB

You just can't relax anywhere these days. Settle down in rural England and what happens? You find a scholar of Egyptology butchered in an archaic tomb. Yikes!

In this newie from Melbourne House you must track down the killer of the petrified Egyptologist and unravel an ancient mystery before you find yourself ending up as someone's Sunday lunch. Give us the hustle and bustle of city life any day.

● Get it now for £24.99 on all formats.





AFTER THE WAR

Down town Manhattan is not exactly the safest place to hang out. Especially after a nuclear holocaust. But that's where you'll find yourself in this latest release from Spanish software house, Dinamic. It looks like it's gonna be a rather meaty shoot 'em up. Blammo!

● On ST, Amiga and PC AFW is £24.99 – better than a can of corned beef any day!

HEAVY METAL



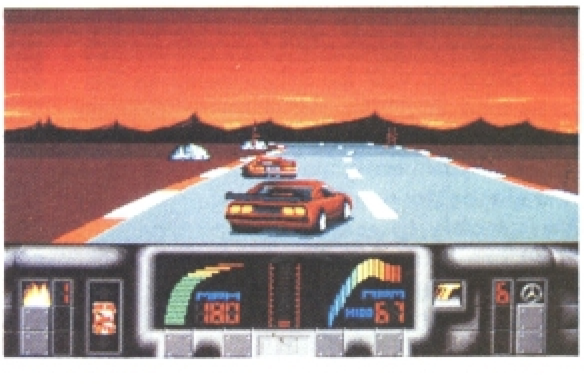
Christmas – a time of turkeys, stuffing and good tidings to all men. A time of pressies, Christmas puds, buying tank sims like *Heavy Metal* and blowing the tracks off all your friends.

Following in the tracks of *Tank*, *Heavy Metal* gives you the chance to practice all your killing arts in a 3D world of land and air combat. Lead from the rear (hem) and devise a strategy to seize your opponents' HQ. Then, after the old Christmas spirit has overcome you, join the chaps down on the battle front and show them how it's done. Give 'em all hell with Abram's tanks and fast attack vehicles and still be home in time for the Christmas Day Bond film.

● Out now from Access on Amiga and ST, priced at a mere £19.99.

OVERLANDER

VVVRRRROOOOOMMM! Elite's latest coin-op conversion should be racing onto your Amiga in January next year. As you can see, it's a beat 'em up and a thumping bargain at £19.99. Actually, that's a lie. No, not the price you fool, the beat 'em up bit.




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THEIR FINEST HOUR: THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN





Lucasfilms is soon to release an air combat simulator allowing you to relive the Battle of Britain. Grit your teeth, strap on your handle bar moustache and reach for the skies.

If your cup of tea is shouting 'Tally ho Ginger, bandits at three o'clock, let's do it for Vera Lynn' and flying Hurricanes and Spitfires in action and even in action replays, you'll be made up. If shouting 'Achtung, achtung spitfoiren' is more your glass of scnapps then you can fly Messerschmitt Me 109s and Junkers 88s.

● Chocks away on ST and Amiga some time in March then chaps.

AMIGA CHART

1. **POWERDRIFT** Activision
2. **PRO TENNIS TOUR** Ubisoft
3. **CONTINENTAL CIRCUS** Virgin
4. **HAWAIIAN ODYSSEY** SubLogic
5. **SHADOW OF THE BEAST** Psygnosis
6. **BATMAN** Ocean
7. **HILLSTAR** A.D.&D.
8. **ALTERED BEAST** Activision
9. **BEACH VOLLEY** Ocean
10. **STRIDER** Capcom

GRIMBLOOD

It's no fun inheriting a castle when you know that lurking within its walls, is an evil murderer who has knocked off most of your ancestors. (Well what do you expect if you give a castle a daft name like *Grimblood*?) As the astute, young



Earl Maximus, you must discover the murderer before his knife discovers your vital organs. Nobleman turns detective? Rather a case of "Earlo, earlo, earlo, what's goin' on 'ere then?" (Ouch!).

● Another in-depth strategy adventure game from Melbourne House. Go searching for it on all PC, ST and Amiga, price £24.99 – you'll need to buy it.

JUMPING JACK SON

What goes "Jumping Jack Flash it's a... Yikes! Splat!" Give up? It's a world conquered by Wagnerian bozos, rather a case of Roll Over Chuck Berry.

Jumping Jack Flash's son Jumping Jack Son is the last Rock 'n' Roller and only he can make sure the song remains the same. To do this he has to track down all the classic rock n' roll records and put them where they belong, which is... er... on the juke box.

Jumping Jack's enemies are monsters which are more infernal than listening to all Beethoven's Symphonies played at once. If Jack can overcome them and collect hits by Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis and the like, then he'll have to face the ultimate challenge: to find the record Elvis gave his mum for her birthday. This record is the symbol of hope for those who believe in Rock 'n' Roll. (It contained two ballads, akcherloi. Resident 'El the Pel' expert) (*Gosh that's interesting. Ed.*) Looks like 'rawk 'n' roll' is here to stay.

● Infogrames will be releasing *Jumping Jack* on Amiga and ST real soon.





VAUX

There's no business like... well like business really so budding capitalists might like to try out *Vaux*, a futuristic game of wheeling, dealing and shooting. Yes shooting. Getting to work in the 21st century is not simply a matter of hopping onto a number 37 bus. First you've got to battle your way past pirates, police and rival traders. After that you've got to negotiate a 3D docking procedure. Only then can you start trading in your commodities in order to raise enough money to buy out everyone else.

But even buying things can be dangerous. You shouldn't mix radio active fuel with fresh food or livestock for example, should you? You should? Oh dear, in that case you'll probably not have got this far anyway. Not to worry, there's always that job on the buses.

● If you fancy a bit of fun for £24.95 on either ST or Amiga then Hurikan's *Vaux* may be just the bus ticket!



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ACE MAGAZINE • DECEMBER 89

PC CHART

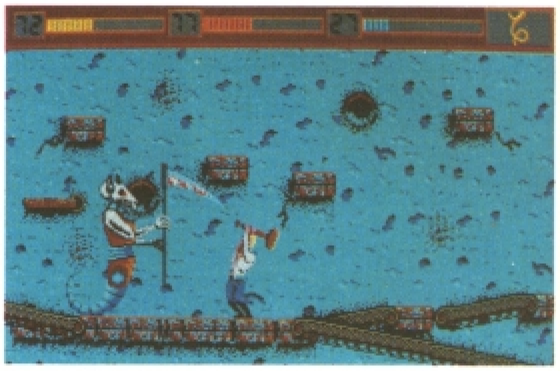
1. **HAWAIIAN ODYSSEY** SubLogic
2. **M1 TANK PLATOON** Microprose
3. **CHESSMASTER 2100** CDS
4. **TEST DRIVE II** Accolade
5. **INDY: THE ADVENTURE GAME**/Lucasfilm
6. **VETTE** Spectrum Holobyte
7. **KINGS QUEST TRIPLE PACK**/Sierra On Line
8. **STARGLIDER II** Rainbird
9. **THE CYCLES** Accolade
10. **OUTRUN** US Gold

DRAGON FLIGHT

"Imagine there's no wizards/It's easy if you try/All the magicians gone missing/And no Dragons in the sky". If that wasn't a No. One smasherooneee in the world of *Dragon Flight* then it should have been, 'cos it describes their problems pretty well. Without all this wisdom and free fire lighters, everyone's giving each other a good old kicking. To bring peace the Four Heroes of *Dragon Flight* must rediscover the lost magic and find the fate of the dragons. To do this they have to battle through 20 levels of interaction, role play action and just about every other sort of action you can think of. Scenarios show a bird's eye view of the towns, a 3D view of the dungeons and profiled conflicts with enemies, monsters and presumably, monstrous enemies. Not surprisingly it comes on more than one disk. But what we want to know is, whatever happened to Puff?

● What we also want to know is when, what and how much? Soon, on ST, Amiga and PC, price £24.99.





NO EXIT

Remember those happy days at school, running down the halls with the school bully breathing down your neck? And where did you hide? In the loos of course (which was rather silly 'cos that was the first place anyone looked).

Now Ego, the hero of this game, may be weed, but he's a whole lot smarter. Instead of a toilet, he hides in an immense black hole Inside this hole is a path spiralling upwards to the only exit. Up this narrow path a man must walk, armed only with a hammer called Inferno (Coo).

Ego has to complete 13 tests, each more difficult than the last but each increasing his strength. Most dangerous are the half animal, half robot monsters called... Monsters(Hmmm). If you can take on this lot then you're tough enough to take on any bullies, and could even set up as a bully yourself.

● Another offering from Coktel Vision at £19.99 on all 16-bit formats - out soon!

EUROPEAN SPACE SHUTTLE



There are those who think that travelling in a European space shuttle is about as safe as accepting a lift from Ayrton Senna. However if your bladder's up to it, then this game gives you the chance to earn your living repairing satellites and going on interspace excursions. (Oooh goody – who's bringing the sandwiches?) There's even the chance to land on an enormous space shuttle carrier, provided you've not come a cropper in some inter galactic pile-up, with all the crap previous space missions left behind.

● Out from Coktel Vision on ST, Amiga, and PC at £24.99. Not for the incontinent.

ULTIMATE GOLF

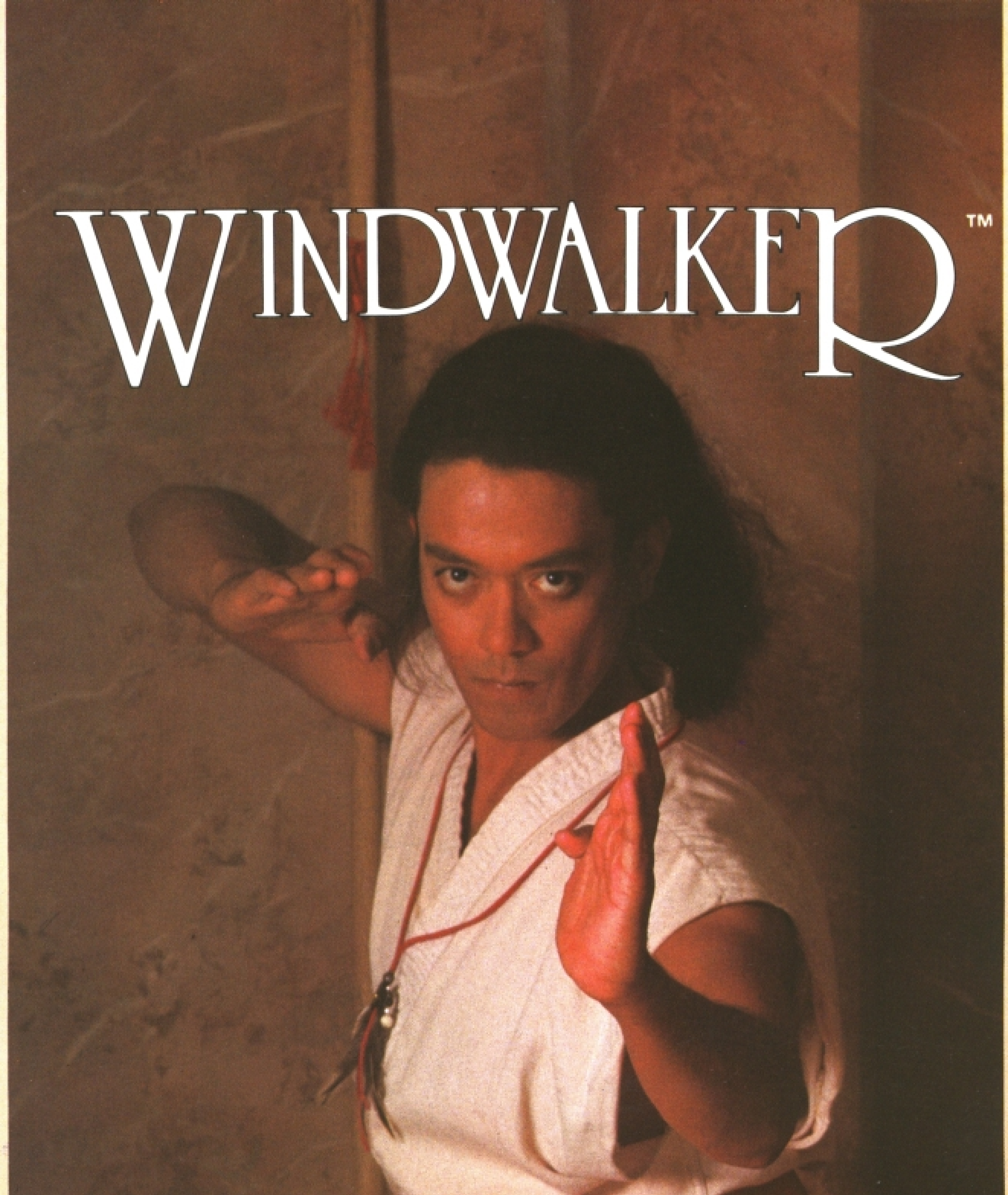
FOOOOOOOUUUURR!! Good that's got that out of the way. Now let's say some something perceptive and intelligent about golf. Like... erm... ooh what nice trousers and where did you get that hat?

Fortunately the chaps at Gremlin take their golfing, to say nothing of their trousers, rather more seriously. *Ultimate Golf* involves up to four players in a highly detailed golfing simulation. Accurate 3D models of real courses have been developed and there are loads of elements to be taken into consideration before you even tee off, like vegetation and weather conditions. Now where's the three iron?

● Tee off with Gremlin for £24.99 on ST, Amiga and PC.



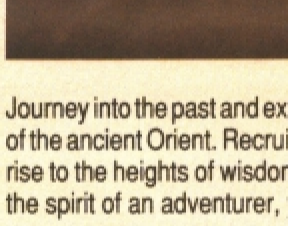
Charts supplied by the Virgin Computer Games Shop, Virgin Megastore, Oxford Street, London W1. Tel. 01-631 1234



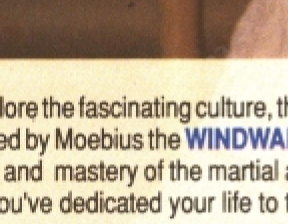
MINDSCAPE INTERNATIONAL



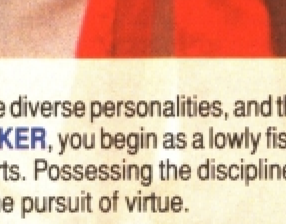
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LETTERS

At last – ZERO has got itself a letters page. Yes: I know there's Black Shape in the *Yikes!* section, but that's an 'alternative letters page', so it's not the same thing at all (especially as it's full of letters about things like 'the availability of *Rainbow* pyjamas' and stuff). Don't worry though, write to me, *Tim Ponting* (the Editor) at The Letters Page, and you'll find that we're actually quite a sensible magazine after all. Right, here goes for this month...

PYJAMARAMAS

Regarding the availability of *Rainbow* pyjamas in Issue Two of ZERO. *(Oh no. Ed.)* You said these rather important bits of 'bedtime kit' could be purchased from Harrods. Well you were wrong: I phoned Harrod's underwear department and they didn't know what I was talking about – in fact I got cut off (rather rudely) in the middle of a sentence. I demand you tell me where one can buy them.

Timothy Stevens
Redhill, Surrey

Demand all you like matey, but I simply haven't got a clue – maybe you could try Thames TV (if anybody knows, they will). Oh, and this letter closes the Rainbow *Pyjama Saga'. Okay?* **Ed.**

PYJAMARA (... SNIP)

About the *Rainbow* pyjamas... (snip).

Peter Carter
Gravesend, Kent

Warned you. **Ed.**

AN RAF CHAPPIE WRITES

Sorry this is handwritten, I'm supposed to be working at the moment (don't print that, for God's sake). *(Whoops, sorry. Ed.)* Seeing as I've used all my stamps entering the competitions, this will have to be a hints/tips/congratulations letter combined – for you to use as you see fit.

Anyway, to get to the point, well done on a great new mag at a realistic price. It's good to see reviewers with a decent sense of humour (I really enjoyed the *Falcon* head to head bit). Talking of *Falcon*, here's a couple of tips you'll probably know already: pressing CNTRL and X gives you nine extra AIM 9Ls plus 500 rounds of ammo (500 rounds only on the mission disk). On the subject of the mission disk, leave the tanks until the end of your chosen mission – they'll be parked on your airfield when you return and are easy to take out (providing you haven't wasted all your Mavericks).

Right. Back to the letter/congrats bit *(About time, I almost stuck this in* Crystal Tips. *Ed.)* Please don't print hundreds of 'my computer's better than yours' letters. Personally I own an Amiga and like it (most of the time) and it can make nicer noises (some of the time) than an ST, but I wish I could pay a fiver less for software and not have to wait as long for it to be ported onto my machine. (Oh, sorry, I mean re-written). Anyway, that's all. I've got to go and make space for my new stereo, video and scalextric set. (Not forgetting, of course, my T-shirt).

Keith Lee
RAF Marham, Norfolk

Of course we're not going to get drawn into the 'my computer's better than yours' debate – it's so blimmin' boring. However, I must point out that the Cray Super-Computer we have installed in the kitchen is 'better' than your Amiga – unfortunately it costs £800,000 a week to run. Oh, and you can't get any games for it either... but it is powerful. **Ed.**

MORE PRAISE

Congratulations on the mag, it's brilliant, as was the Amiga cover disk. The four page reviews are much better than other magazines around, and the *Flying Tonight* article was also brilliant. But what I want to know is are you going to go downhill after about ten issues (like *Ace* and *The Games Machine* did)?

Glen Ross
Portmahomack, Ross-shire

We certainly are NOT going to go downhill after ten issues. We plan to start becoming crap from about issue six. **Ed.**

WE'RE A BUNCH OF THICKOS

(1) How did you come up with the name ZERO? Is it the sum total of all your IQs?
(2) Congratulations on a refreshingly new, funny magazine. The trouble with most software reviewing mags is that they take themselves too seriously and restrict themselves simply to the software and hardware industry, never diversifying to even try to cover other subjects. I thought your magazine was just going to be 'one more banana in the bunch', but was pleasantly surprised at how varied and humorous the different sections were – including the reviews.

Paul Baumber
Grimsby, Humberside.

(1) The mag was originally going to be called EIGHT, but as the most intelligent member of staff was killed in a car crash a month before the launch we had to recalculate. Thus ZERO. Well spotted.
(2) You know what's going to happen though. We'll get slagged off by the other mags for 'being different', but then they'll try to copy us (and get it wrong anyway). Oh, and then Belgium will explode! **Ed.**

A LENGTHY ONE

Congratulations on ZERO. Overall it's brilliant and beats other Amiga and multi-format magazines hands down.

Mark Wright
Bangor, County Down

Blimey, that was a long letter – congratulations on your tenacity. I think you deserve a rest now. **Ed.**

DISK LOSS

After unsticking my cover disk from the first issue of ZERO, I loaded up the game, and after a while took the disk out and went downstairs to watch *Rolf's Cartoon Time.* When I came back, the disk had vanished from my desk. I looked everywhere and had just given up hope when I happened to glance at the cover: "If your free disk has come unstuck please ask the newsagent where it is," it read. So, I popped down to my local newsagents and asked him where it was. "Why," he said, "It got pushed down the back of your desk by your cat." I went back and there was my disk – behind my desk. I gave my cat a right old telling off, I can tell you.

Justin Mason
Ryde, Isle Of White

To stop cats interfering with items on a cluttered desk, it's quite a good idea to sellotape ice-lolly sticks to all four of their little legs. These 'mini feline-splints' make clambering onto furniture difficult: in fact they make simply standing upright rather tricky. But don't try it at home – it's a job for 'professionals'. **Ed.**

OUTRAGE IN DUDLEY

I purchased issue one of ZERO, and was appalled. It was full of profanity and contained numerous references to the size of the sexual organs of the male staff. I don't think of myself as a prude, but I feel that people buying a computer publication want to see sensible reviews and features – NOT sheer filth. Apart from this the magazine is quite good, and if you endeavour to cut back on the smut I might even buy an issue in the future.

Andrew Watson
Dudley, West Midlands.

Oh, alright, you win. There won't be any more gratuitous swearing or phallic references.You have my word. (Believe that and you'll belive any old crap.) **Ed.**

WRITE TO THE ED, ZERO, 14 RATHBONE PLACE, LONDON, W1P 1DE.
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ZERO reviews

For the benefit of readers who have only just cottoned on to the brilliance of ZERO, and for whom this is a 'first issue', we've been rather nice – we're repeating the explanation of the scoring system. However, if you already know it off by heart, then you get a hearty pat on the back for being a 'regular reader', and are entitled to a free ZERO supermarket trolley.*

Each month we'll be picking out the best games available and devoting three or four full pages to them. These **BIG REVIEWS** will have a basic run-through of the scenario and game genre, followed by detailed reviews of all the different formats the game is currently available on. Dotted about will be various boxes, containing useful information. **THE VERDICT** box is pretty straightforward, with marks (out of 100) awarded for ***Graphics***, ***Sound***, ***Addictiveness*** and ***Execution***. The first three are self explanatory, but here's what Execution means. It means that you're going to be shot at dawn. No, it doesn't actually, um, it means that the programmers have been rather 'clever' in some way or other. For instance, have they included some rather stunning graphics routines? Are they 'pushing back the boundaries' at all? Then they'll score quite well. The ***Final Score*** is the sum of these scores divided by four (roughly), and next to this is the ***Summary***, which is a very brief critique of the game. There's a **HASSLE FACTOR** score (which is marked out of 10). Basically, a game wants to score low here, as the Hassle Factor is deductable from the main score. Is there an unnecessary amount of disk swapping? Have the programmers been thoughtless and forgotten about something called 'playability'? The Hassle Factor box will let you know. Then there's the **WHAT'S WHAT** box. This will tell you, erm, 'what's what' – price, release date, all that sort of stuff. Any game scoring 90 or more will receive the coveted **ZERO HERO** award. Basically, games this good are a 'must-buy' as far as we're concerned.

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	90
S	SOUND	90
A	ADDICTIVENESS	81
E	EXECUTION	83

A graphical masterpiece and a brilliant conversion to boot. **84**

Games that don't get the multi-page treatment will still appear in **SHORTS**, a series of smaller, but still equally valid and in-depth reviews. This month each Short is, um, shorter than usual – that's because of the amount of games released at this time of year (we had to squeeze them in somehow). If a game is released on one format a while after it's appeared on the others, it'll find itself allocated to a **DEJA VU** (or already seen). Plus we'll give you an issue/page reference so you can hunt back to see the original review. Finally, especially for those of you on the dole (who aren't supplementing your income with a bit of moonlighting) there's **THE PRICE IS RIGHT** section. This is the budget bit, full of the kind of games that are kinder on the pocket than others. Mind you, they only get an overall score, cos they're, erm, cheap.

***No you aren't.**

CRITICS' CORNER

Mime artists eh? What chumps they are, to be sure. Pretending to be stuck inside an invisible box and other such silly things. Ptui. Why don't they pretend to be doing things that actually happen in real life? We asked our cast of critics to perform a 'proper' mime for us.



Paul Lakin: Paul plopped his hands in his pockets and slumped his shoulders forward. He studied the ground around his feet and shuffled backwards and forwards. Every so often he took his left hand out of his pocket and studied his wrist. Each time he did this he appeared to get slightly more agitated. Again, we were defeated and had to ask what he was doing. "I'm waiting for a bus," he replied, smugly.



Sean Kelly: "You definitely won't get this," said Sean: and he was right. Firstly, he straightened his index finger. Secondly he extended his arm and jabbed at something. Then he retracted his arm, put his hands in his pockets and started whistling – while gazing intently at the object he had just 'manipulated' with such finesse. Have you guessed yet? No? Tell us, Sean. "I've just switched on the kettle and I'm waiting for it to boil." Blinking Nora.



Wing Co Marcus 'Binky' Berkmann DFC: Air ace Binky squinted at us through his monacle, sniffed, then agreed to 'play the game'. Crouching down, he wiped his forehead with the back of his hand and then, using a 'squat thrust', propelled himself into the air. Um, is it something aeronautic? we suggested. "Yes. The wizard kite's just shipped a bellyful of flak, and I'm bailing out into Bosch territory." We should have guessed.



Matt Bielby: "Oh, wonderful, it's just like drama school" burbled Matt excitedly. "Look, I'm a tree, a tree, spreading my branches higher – higher into the sky. So high, so high. My branches are..." You're not supposed to tell us what you're pretending to be, you clot. "Oh, sorry," he said and repeated his actions, this time in silence. You're a tree, we announced. "Erm, no. I'm an explosion actually," he replied, lying through his teeth.



Jackie Ryan: "Oh good. I'm in a drama group, and we were doing this 'mime lark' only yesterday." She proceeded to shuffle around the room, dragging one leg behind her. Every so often she would stop, point and appear to exchange a couple of words with a companion. "So what do you think that was?" she quizzed. We hadn't got the foggiest. "It was a person with an injured leg visiting the zoo with a friend." Of course – silly of us not to guess.



Duncan MacDonald: Duncan, as always, got it wrong. First, he did the 'stuck in a box with invisible walls' routine. We explained (again) that the idea was to do something different. He disappeared, returned five minutes later and stood upright, very stiffly, with his eyes wide open. After a two minute wait, he closed one of his eyelids. It had been painted red, we noticed. "I'm a traffic light," he proclaimed. We told him to go and take a rest.



Jonathan Davies: Jonathan clasped his hands together in front of his chest, crouched down ever so slightly and wibbled his right elbow around in the air. He had a pained expression on his face and looked as if he was swearing. We give up, what are you doing? we asked. "I've just collected 13 half-full coffee cups from the lounge and I'm trying to open the kitchen door with my elbow – and I'm dying to go to the toilet." Blimey.



Mike Gerrard: "Great!" exclaimed Mike. "I bet you won't get *this*." He stood on 'tippy toes' and stretched his right arm high above his head. He performed a sort of 'screwy' motion with his hand, brought his arm back down, dropped something, picked up something else, stretched skywards again and went through another 'screwy motion'. You're replacing a light bulb, we said. "Oh," replied Mike. "Can I have another go?" No.

Photos: Tony Sleep

ZERO HERO

F-29 RETALIATOR

A solid filled 3D fighter plane simulation from Ocean? Surely not? Surely 'yes', actually. *Duncan MacDonald* and *Jackie Ryan* strapped themselves into the cockpit of a Hawker Harrier, stuck Ocean HQ's address into the autopilot, took off, pressed the wrong buttons, crashed, spent three weeks in comas, came round, spent a further three weeks in traction, two weeks convalescing and then hobbled despondently back to the ZERO office to have an in-depth look at *F-29 Retaliator* from the safety of a sofa...

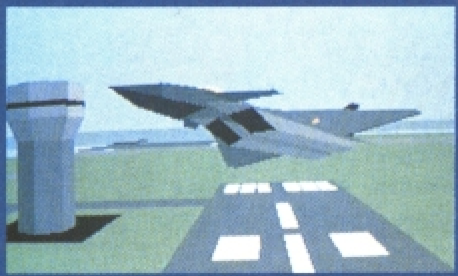
THE COMBAT ZONES



We're in the Middle East. You can tell because of the sand.



Arizona! Who could mistake those funny mountains with no 'hats' on?



Aha. Europe. So lush. So green. So, erm, near. I'd better climb.

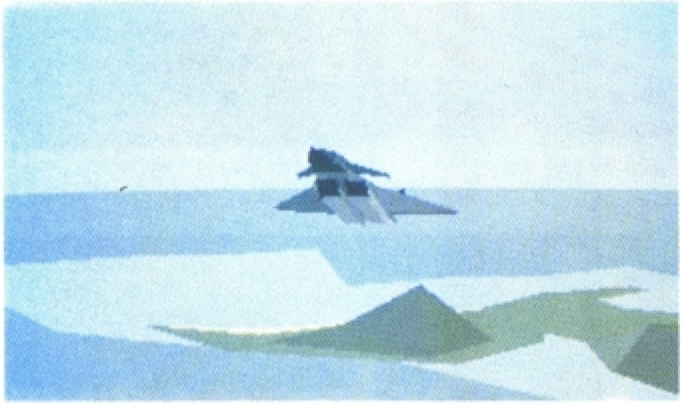


The Pacific Ocean. Blimey, there are some cars on it. *(Ships actually. Ed.)*

First there was *Interceptor*. Then there was *Falcon*. Then *F-16 Combat Pilot, F-15 Strike Eagle* and the *Falcon Mission Disk*. Blimey, what a lot of 'F' words, and now we've got another one: *F-29 Retaliator*. So how will *Retaliator* 'measure up'? After all, there's quite a bit of competition – given the pedigree of the aforementioned.

The first thing you'll notice (and you don't really have to be very observant) is that although this game is called *F-29 Retaliator,* there is actually another plane included in the package: it's an F-22 – you know, the weird looking one that's getting most of the publicity. Now, if Ocean was *our* company, we would have insisted on this game being called *F-29 Retaliator (Oh, And An F-22 As Well)*. But unfortunately Ocean *isn't* our company, so we can't.

The game starts with the enrolling section. Like *Falcon*, the ranks range from First Lieutenant to Colonel: the higher the rank, the higher the difficulty level and the more points you'll score for each 'kill'. Then you get to choose a scenario, of which there are four (as opposed to *Falcon*'s one).



Tally ho, off we go. Oh no, I've forgotten my sandwiches.

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	F-29 Retaliator
PUBLISHER	Ocean
PRICE	£19.99/£24.99
FORMAT	ST/Amiga
RELEASED	ST/Amiga: Out now PC: Spring 1990

THE SCENARIOS

Arizona is your first scenario. It's the USAF Test Range, and is set in about 1000 square miles. It's chock full of targets and remote-controlled vehicles for you to practice on. Luckily things don't fire back, so if you want you can safely cram your granny and auntie Maude into the cockpit and listen to them gasp as you give them a taste of modern fighter-ace high-speed combat.

Next up it's the **Middle East**. You're affiliated with a 'friendly' Middle Eastern nation, who is currently engaged in a fierce war with two other countries. The friendly nation's artillery is heavily outnumbered, although technically superior to its rivals. To succeed, three enemy planes must be destroyed for every one of your own. The war is on two fronts, with large tank battles to the south west and artillery exchanges across the natural river boundary to the south east.

Or there's a slightly more watery scenario: namely the **Pacific Ocean**. The strategically important volcanic islands of Solomos provide vital oil supplies, and contain the only deep sea port for 1000 miles in all directions. A small military airstrip is located there with a squadron of ATFs (Advanced Tactical Fighters).

A military blockade by the enemy fleet has cut off all support to the islands, threatening your oil supplies. Plus they're toying with the idea of invading the islands. A sea-bound task force, led by

VERY SECRET AVIATION THINGS

NO.1: AN OX

Wilbur and Orville Wright were *not* the first people to successfully attain powered flight. This feat was first accomplished in 1794 by a bloke from Calais called Henri Formenoire. His iron-winged 'ox-powered' helicopter achieved an airborne span of some five seconds before 'landing' at the bottom of the cliff from which it was launched. Sadly, both Henri and the ox perished.

the J.F. Kennedy, is steaming towards the war zone though, and guess who's on board? That's right: you!

Finally there's **Europe (The Ultimate Battle Front)**. This is a real biggie. A full scale conventional war across the heartland of Europe is beginning. All airfields, installations, factories and towns will be attacked and initial losses are expected to be heavy on both sides. Mounting enemy activity has been reported near the border, where an estimated 9000 tanks and three million soldiers have amassed. The enemy is expected to launch a huge assault on key border points, and its airforce will plunge deep into your country, crippling the infra-structure.

Two enemy tank divisions have assembled along the border with huge reinforcements being drawn up from their rear flanks. The situation will be critical if the enemy tank divisions break through the border defences, as they'll plunge deep into your territory – threatening the industrial complexes at Huttgart, Nurgen and Coberg.

Well. Those are the scenarios. Choose one and you zoom through a host of other options, such as Pilot's Log (where you set up and save your status), Zulu Alert (which is a 'quickstart' unlimited weapons jobbie for non-realists), and finally you'll get to Mission Control, where you're provided with a detailed map showing the battle front, and a text description of the latest war events, regularly updated.

YAHOO, CHOCKS AWAY...

We're nearly ready for take off. Just a couple more things to do. First it's probably quite a good idea to select which of the 'wizard kites' you actually wish to fly. Then you'll want to arm yourself (to the teeth, probably) with weapons. Air to air, air to ground, air to Venus – things like that. Now, finally, you get to choose a mission from within the scenario you've already gone for. The higher your rank, the more missions will be available. There are absolutely loads of them, but we'll just give you an example of two (from the Pacific Ocean scenario)...

(1) The Leonid Brehznev has been sighted with a support ship. Locate and destroy. (i.e. sink a ship).

(2) A fierce Enemy counter strike has sunk three US ships and threatens the JFK. Provide air support and destroy the two enemy vessels.

At last. It really is time for your 'chocks' to be 'removed'. Wheeeee!

THE PLANES



THE F-29

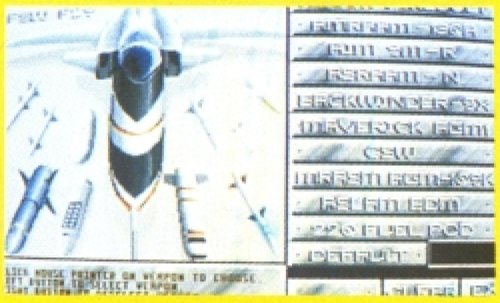
(THE ONE *NOT* ON THE COVER.) The F-29 travels faster than an Austin Allegro. Over a thousand miles per hour faster, actually. Even with a full payload it scrapes Mach 1.5 (and that's without the afterburner turned on). It's pretty good at flying high as well and can cruise along, no problems, at 70,000 feet. This is especially handy when there are loads of Surface To Air Missiles on the ground – as these tend to peter out at high altitudes. The F-29 is also a bit 'handy' when it comes to 'not being picked up by enemy radar', because of the stuff it's made out of. The whole thing is so incredibly complex that it's impossible for a pilot to exploit all the modes by himself. Hmmm. Quite a fab little plane, by any accounts.



THE F-22

(THE ONE ON THE COVER.) The F-22 also travels more quickly than an Austin Allegro. And, also unlike most Allegros, it has a combat radius of between 700 to 920 miles without refuelling – more than enough for any mission. Just think, you could watch the end of *Neighbours*, hop into the plane, fly from London to the Scilly Isles (destroying Cornwall en route), and be back in London in time for Wogan (with Sue Lawley). The F-22 has Pratt & Whitney XF 119 engines, which have vectoring and reversing nozzles (which, combined with onboard computer systems, means the plane is rather manoeuvrable and doesn't need large air-brakes). Yes. It's quite a neat aircraft.

THE WEAPONS



Just some of the weapons you'll be able to take up with you (and preferably not bring back).

AIR TO AIR MISSILES

AIAAM FIRE BOLT: Advanced interceptor, long range 'fire and forget' jobbies. These are the successors to the AIM 54 Phoenix and are probably the most sophisticated radar homing missiles in the world. Range: 130 miles. Speed: Mach 5.

AIM 9M-R-SIDEWINDER: The latest and most advanced of this family, with an imaging infra red seeker. Range: 11 miles. Speed: Mach 3.

BACK-WINDER 9X: Rear mount short range air to air missile. It fits on your, er, bottom. Range: 6 miles. Speed: Mach 3

AIR TO SURFACE MISSILES

MRASM CRUISE MISSILE: Wahay, some real 'kit' – a 'launch and leave' missile that flies for a few 100 miles, hugging the landscape, before discharging loads of 'bomblets'. Range: 370 miles. Speed: 650 mph.

ASALM: Advanced Strategic Air Launched Missile. Effective against all forms of surface target. Even Claire Rayner. Range: 700 miles. Speed: Mach 3.5 to 4.5.

CSW: Conventional Stand-Off Weapon – can distinguish between tanks and low value trucks or decoys. It has 20 warheads which seperate over a wide area homing in on particular targets. Range: 30 miles. Speed: Mach 1.1.

COMPO

THE JACKET



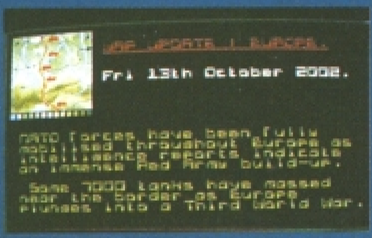
WING! WING! WING!

Recognise the jacket? You should do. We commissioned designer Russell Tate (whose illustrated jackets already adorn some rather famous 'rock 'n' roll' backs) to actually paint this *Retaliator* design onto the back of a leather jacket. Then we photographed it, sellotaped some words onto it and, lo and behold – it's our front cover. (*It's just a little bit more technical than that, actually. Fed up Design Ed.*) But, um, we've finished with it now, so it's up for grabs. To try and win it, simply answer the following question (in not more than seven words): Exactly how secret is the F-29? Write your answer and address on the back of a postcard and mark the front with Send Me The Leathers Compo, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE. You've got until 31 Jan 1990, when we'll mix the postcards up and pick one. Tally ho.

ST

Jackie: Wow. If this is what flying's all about, I want to join the RAF! *(Don't you mean WRAF? Ed.)* Where are the application papers? Ah, here they are. Right: name. Um, easy enough, Jackie Ryan. Date of birth? Er, (scribble scribble). Any of these diseases? Erm, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, nope, blimey – I don't think I can get that one, erm, nope, nope, nope. Reason for wanting to be a fighter pilot? Um, I've just had a go on *Retaliator*. Height? Awwwwwww! They always get me on this one. I know, I'll add a couple of inches – four feet three inches. There that should do it. Just pop it in the post and then get back to *Retaliator*. Plop.

Now, this game is good. Very good indeed. It's so massive that you can fly around bombing bridges and things. *(That's what you're meant to do. Ed.)* There's a load of 'tactical' stuff at the beginning, and more options than you could shake one of Douglas Bader's legs at, and you've got to know what weapons to take with you on each particular mission if you want to get medals and things. Once you're through all this, though (and you've memorised loads of keyboard buttons), it's take-off time.



See those arrows? They're pointing to where the action starts to get 'heavy'. That's right: it's on the front line.

Cor, I love that take-off bit. I like switching to the rear window and banking hard to one side. It's just so much more fun than looking out of a boring DC10 window when you're going on holiday to Turkey or somewhere. Plus your ears don't pop, and you don't get handed a plastic tray full of totally useless food.

Everything moves so smoothly and fast, that it really is quite realistic. In fact, here's something for ST owners to crow about. While the 'static' drawings on the Amiga have more colour in them, the animation on the ST is marginally quicker – and as the Amiga screen update is so blinking good in itself, that means that the ST update is just tremendous.

There's so much to shoot at. Boats for example. *(Ships actually. Ed.)* They're big, big, big – and there's even water turbulence coming from their sterns. The islands (in the Pacific scenario) even have little strips of yellow beach scattered around: so if you 'prang' your 'kite' you can set the crate down and while away the rest of the war making sandcastles. Oh, and there are all sorts of other brill things as well – such as the railway lines: if you bomb a big hole in the track, the train actually derails when it reaches the crater. And once you've bombed something, it stays bombed (until you get killed yourself). Another 'little touch' (and there are loads of them) is the water surrounding the islands. It's light blue (shallow, sand and coral), as opposed to the dark blue of the deeper sea. It may sound obvious, but details like this really help bring a game to life.

All in all, *Retaliator* is magnificent. The air-to-air combat got a bit hectic, but spinning out of control towards the earth isn't quite so bad when the scenery's so nice. What we have here is sort of a cross between *Interceptor* and *Falcon* (and then some). Brilliant stuff.

VERY SECRET AVIATION THINGS
NO.2: BELGIUM
Belgium has the technology to build a low level strike aircraft which is capable of travelling at 98 per cent of the speed of light (in short bursts). The prototype will be unveiled at the 1991 Paris Air Show.



THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	95
S	SOUND	90
A	ADDICTIVENESS	90
E	EXECUTION	94

20 40 60 80 100

A fighter-pilot simulator with real depth. But it isn't boring – not by a long chalk. In fact it's absolutely fantastic.

94

MAD-DOG THF



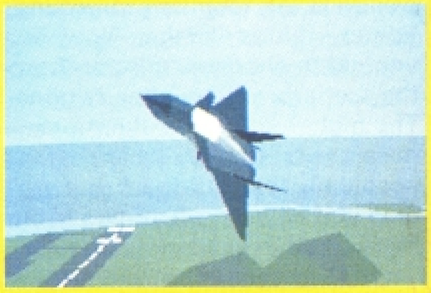
1) Well, here I am. My very first 'sortie' deep into enemy territory. It certainly is, um... enemy-ish. Look, there are my chums, Algy and Binky. Oh dear, my butterflies are getting really bad. What if I get shot down? I might get hurt. Worse – I might be killed.



3) (Five minutes later). Well, they didn't spot me leaving. Mind you, I have turned my radio off, so maybe they did. Still, I'll blame it all on the radio anyway. I know, I'll say that I received instructions to return to base – but it was actually a cunning enemy 'trick'.



5) Oh, it's 'clicked'. Of course, they're 'boats' or something. What was that 'remembering poem' they taught me? Um, "Cars go on the road, Kites get caught in trees, Planes go in the air, And boats go on the sea". Yup, they're definitely boats, alright.

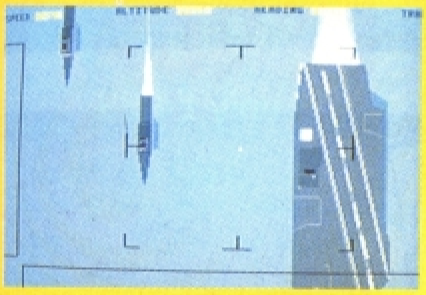


7) Oh dear, I've forgotten which of these buttons makes those wheel thingies come out of the bottom of the plane. Um, eeny, meeny, miny, mo. No, I know it's not that one – I used that earlier to make the engine go faster. Oh, maybe it's that one. I'll press it.

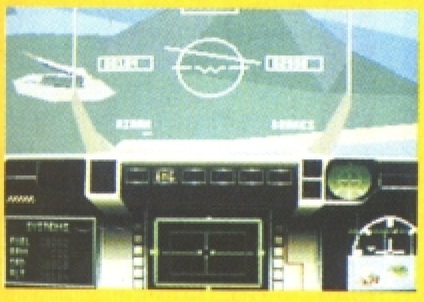
FIGHTER ACE!



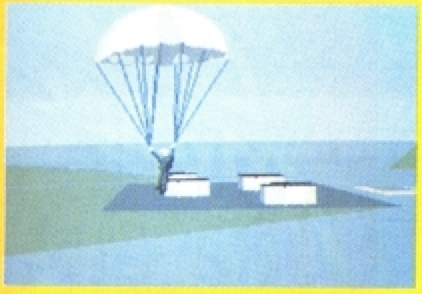
2) (20 minutes later). Oh no, I'm getting really bad tummy-ache now. I think I'd better go to the toilet. Surely Algy and Binky can cope on their own – they've got enough weapons, after all. They'll never notice if I 'peel off' and head for home. Yup. I'm off.



4) Blimey, look down there. There are some funny giant aeroplanes on the water. Oh, hang on a minute, they aren't aeroplanes. Or are they? I never did do too well in my aircraft recognition tests. Well, I did, but only because I copied Binky's answers.



6) At last, there's home base. My tummy-ache's totally gone now. I wonder if that sandcastle I built yesterday is still in one piece. Hmmm, hope Binky and Algy are alright. Mind you, my 'story' will actually knit together better if they both get killed.



8) Blimey, it wasn't the right one after all. It made my seat go whooshing out. Still, that funny blanket type thing that was hidden in my rucksack seems to be slowing me down quite a bit. Oh. I'm going to land in the sea. Now how does that 'doggy paddle' lark go again?



Dunc: Well. What can I say? The word 'Wheeee' springs to mind actually, but I'm sure real fighter pilots don't say things like that – I'll have to restrain myself to saying "Polygons ahoy" instead. Polygons are in fact very much 'ahoy' in this game: the ground details are beautifully, er, detailed (unless you happen to be about 30 computer miles away from them, in which case there's a sort of 'dot'). There are gas plants, tanks, SAM sites, landing strips – the list is endless. Well, it's not quite 'endless', but you know what I mean: think of what you get in *Falcon* and double it. And, of course, there are the mountains and rivers and roads and railway lines – oh, and wait till you see the islands and ships. And all of the locations are bombable, although it isn't really a very good idea to destroy churches and hospitals. But then again, they don't fire back...

Nearly all the views you could want are included in the game: satellite (better than the *Falcon* one), control tower (again better), left, right, backwards and forwards from inside the cockpit, and a fixed exterior view (unlike *Falcon* it always looks north, but you can zoom in and out – in magnify mode – to your hearts content). I'll tell you what *Retaliator* hasn't got, though, and that's a cockpit interior 'look up' mode. Bit of a bummer in my opinion, as I use this a lot in *Falcon*. I'll tell you something else *Retaliator* hasn't got, and that's an in-flight cocktail cabinet, but I suppose they ran out of memory space. What *Retaliator* has got, however, is brilliant action and a scenario depth that'll leave you gasping in awe: there are 99 (count 'em, 99) different missions. So, we get to the burning question: "Is *Retaliator* better than *Falcon*?" The answer is no – it's the crappest game I've ever seen in my life. Actually, that was a little 'joke': the real answer is Yes. *Retaliator* is (a couple of little quibbles aside) even better than *Falcon*. And it's certainly much bigger. Basically, you'd be a bit of a prat not to buy it – unless of course you hate flight sims, in which case what on earth are you doing reading this in the first place? Go away at once.

VERY SECRET AVIATION THINGS
NO.3: VIRGIN 'AIR'
Richard Branson manages to keep the fares low on his transatlantic Virgin crossings by (a) 'thinning' his aviation fuel by mixing it with nail-polish remover, (b) using 're-mould' tyres on the undercarriage of his Boeing 747s, and (c) only having one working engine on each aircraft. *(That's a pack of lies actually. Ed.)*

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	95
S	SOUND	90
A	ADDICTIVENESS	90
E	EXECUTION	94

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

A brand new, and rather brilliant, fighter/bomber simulation – just what the doctor ordered. Chocks away and tally ho.

94



VERY SECRET AVIATION THINGS
NO.4: ERM...
(That's enough very secret aviation things. Ed).

STOP



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  "A very sophisticated simulation indeed – realistic ski jumps and competitive two-player action – all enhanced with breathtaking graphics and excellent sampled sound effects."

CodeMasters, PO Box 6, Southam
Warwickshire CV33 0SH

COMPO

PHWOR! WORRA DISH!

WIN! WIN! WIN!



A Stupendously Brilliant Amstrad Satellite Dish With Remote Control Giving You Access To Thousands* Of New TV Channels! PLUS Ten Copies Of *Wild Streets* From Those Incredibly Nice People At Titus.

*er... well, about eight, actually

Any pico second now, Titus will be releasing *Wild Streets*, a scrolling beat 'em up featuring 30 levels of good ol' sock it to 'em action, where armed only with your fists, you must go off in search of the Chief Of Intelligence who's been kidnapped by the Mafia. To celebrate this 'happening' happening, Titus has stumped up a fab Amstrad Satellite Dish and Receiver plus remote control for one winner, along with more than nine (so that's um... ten actually) copies of *Wild Streets* the game for the runners up. And if you've got a dad who whips out his electric tool at every given opportunity, don't worry 'cos Titus will even pay to have it professionally installed! All you'll have to do then is sit back and decide whether to watch another seven hours of MTV or women's wrestling on the Lifestyle Channel.

DISHING THE DIRT

If you fancy winning this rather spiffing prize (which'll give you access to trillions of new TV shows every week) you're going to have to prove you know a thing or two about the ol' goggle box and 'dish' the dirt on some of the 'wild' streets that have appeared on it in the past. 'Cos we want you to take a peek at the characters pictured opposite, identify them and then name the TV streets in which they live. So for example, if you think that picture **A** is Mrs. Mangel from *Neighbours*, then write 'Mrs. Mangel From Ramsay Street' next to **A** in the coupon and so on.

NEXT...

Once you've sussed that out, fill in the form, send it to **'Bring Back Hilda Ogden Compo' ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.** And make sure your entries enter the orbit before January 31st 1990 or they'll be removed from the programming schedules altogether.







I'm street smart. The characters and the streets they live in are...

A ______________________

B ______________________

C ______________________

NAME ______________________

ADDRESS ______________________

______________________ **ZIP CODE** ____________

My computer is...

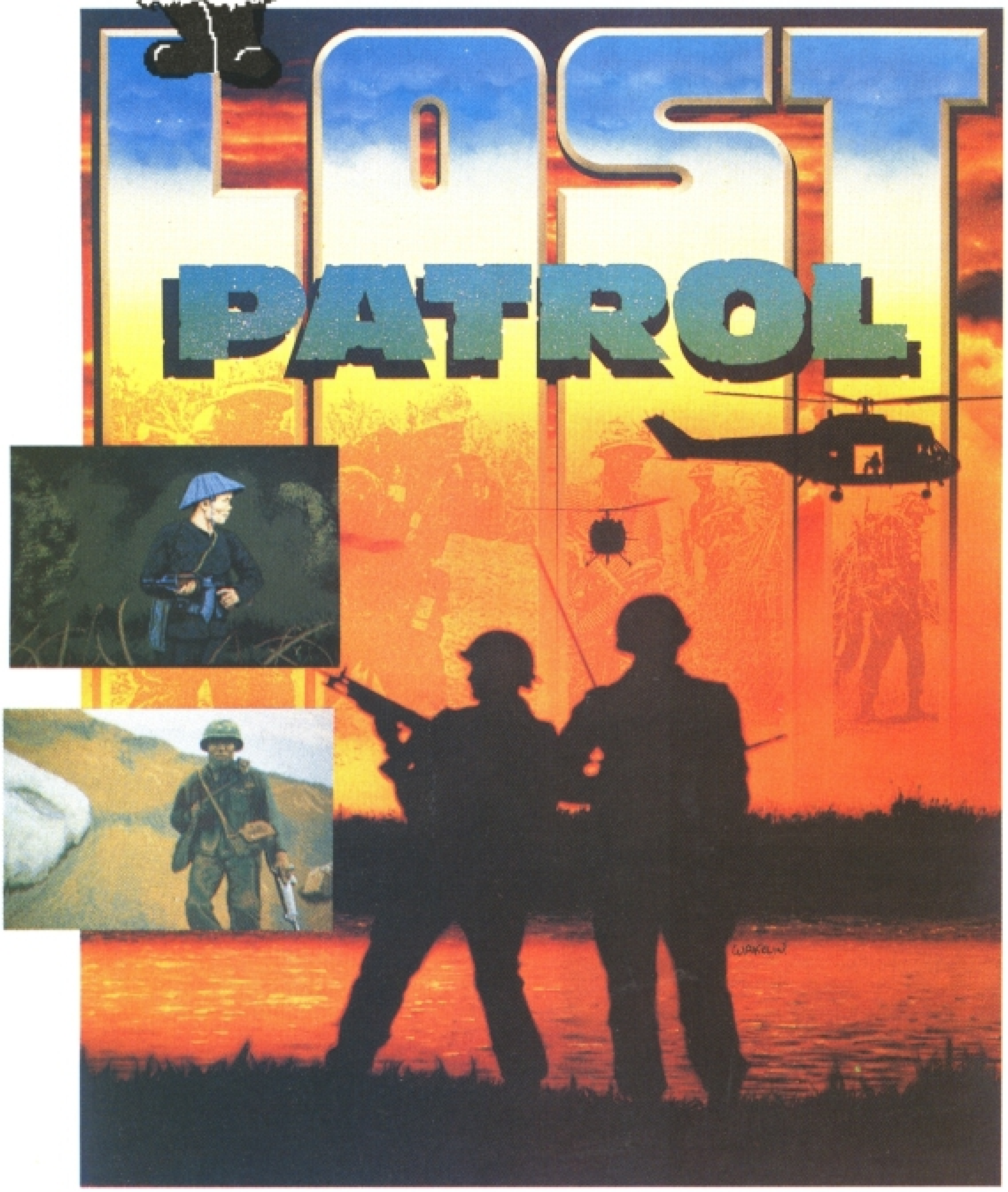
STREET LAW

- **Any employee of Dennis Oneshots Ltd or Titus caught trying to enter this compo will be slowly roasted on an open fire.**
- **Any entries received after January 31st 1990 will be used to make a papier mache giraffe.**
- **The Editor's decision is final. No messing whatsoever.**

THE IMMACULATE



Ever wondered how that computer game sitting snugly at the bottom of your Christmas tree on Christmas morning actually got there? Fearlessly probing *John Minson* asks the dreaded question... "Mummy, where do computer games come from?" and discovers the intimate secrets behind the conception and birth of Ocean's Christmas release, *The Lost Patrol*.



Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house, nothing was stirring...

Except for a programmer busily trying to complete a major release which had to be under several hundred Christmas trees the next morning.

Every November the annual trickle of computer games tumbling onto the shelves of your local computer emporium, turns into a veritable torrent. Every software house in the world wants to get into your Christmas stockings and stand at the end of your bed on Christmas morning. But as you rip the gaily coloured wrapping from the parcel (you macho brute, you), spare a thought for programmers like Ian Harling, creator of Ocean's *The Lost Patrol*, who started work on the software you're now racing to slip into your disk drive over a year ago...

STAGE ONE

THE IDEA

NOVEMBER 16 1988

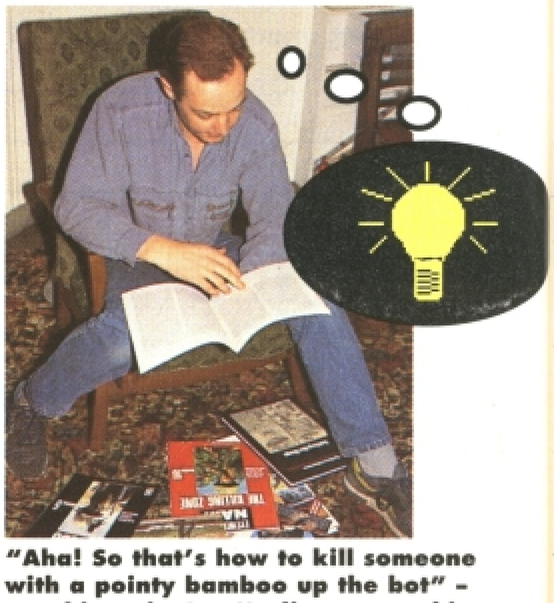
In November 1988, *The Lost Patrol* was but a twinkle in graphic artist, **Ian Harling**'s eye. Ian was at a turning point in his career. He'd just left Arcana software to form Shadow Development, his own company, and so his first game had to put him on the map. But how?

"At the time everybody said that Cinemaware was great but that there was no gameplay," he recalls. "I felt it would be nice to try and beat them." Brave words for a rookie.

So having decided on the style of game he was going to aim at, Ian next needed a subject for his initial release. He hit on the Vietnam war. "It's easy to find lots of information about it because it's very well documented. And I wanted to crack the American market. I knew it was a war they felt very deeply about. But their attitude is they want to forget about it. So it was like anti-marketing."

Capitalising on his artistic skills he created five sample screens and roughed out a scenario. He then sent these to seven companies – including Cinemaware – and back came seven rejection letters. "I was completely despondent. I thought maybe I should be going into the arcades and doing what everybody else was doing with spaceships and little men."

Fortunately he replied to an advertisement from a company called Blitz who were looking for graphic artists. The man behind Blitz agreed to represent Ian's game. Within a few weeks they'd sold *The Long Walk*, as it was then called, to Ocean. But Ian's troubles were far from over...



"Aha! So that's how to kill someone with a pointy bamboo up the bot" – graphic artist Ian Harling researching a typical 'Nam 'scenario'.

CONCEPTION

(Or Where Do Little Computer Games Come From?)

STAGE TWO

THE SOFTWARE HOUSE

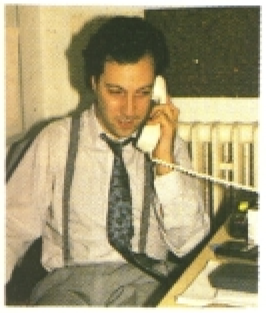


"Oh dear, my deodorant isn't working" – one of the five D-Paint screens originally sent to Ocean.

JANUARY 9 1989

"Early in '89, Paul Giffard (of Blitz) approached me with two projects," Ocean's Software Supremo, Gary Bracey recalls. "One was a flight simulator and one was *Lost Patrol*. All he had was a *D-Paint* disk of graphics. I liked the sound of it and the quality of the graphics. So I decided to contact Ian for a more detailed specification."

But just as it was going so well Blitz folded. Luckily, Gary was so keen on the project he decided to persevere, dealing directly with Ian. Ocean's enthusiasm for the project was obviously important to Ian and his fledgling company. "I went up to Manchester to meet Gary and I couldn't believe how friendly he was after meeting some other companies. Most are so business-like – you're just a product to them." According to Gary a trusting and supporting relationship between programmer and publisher is just common sense. "I tend to do most of my dealings on a handshake. I look long-term." For his part Ian says, "*The Lost Patrol* didn't fall in with anything Ocean had done before but Gary had faith. He pulled it along all the way. He's a hell of a nice guy."



Gary Bracey looking very, um... bracey.

Ocean doesn't believe in buying programmers with massive advances though. "The royalty (the percentage of profits paid to the author) should cover the cost of the development of the game for the programmer or artist," says Gary. "The royalty should be the butter on the bread. To put a product on the street costs a lot more than development though, in marketing and merchandising. We don't ask the programmer to share that risk but we do ask for a compromise."

Ian had been in the right place at the right time. *The Lost Patrol*, the game he'd always wanted to write, dropped on to Gary's desk just as Ocean decided that there was a large enough market for original 16-bit titles to make them financially worthwhile.

But Ian's outline lacked a lot of detail so a meeting was arranged. "He had some ideas but they were a little sketchy," says Gary. "So he sought my ideas about direction and we came up with a strong specification which has been implemented." *The Lost Patrol* was finally marching...

STAGE THREE

THE STORYBOARD

MARCH 28 1989

"At first I thought it was just a war. People shooting at each other. Then I began to get these books and for a while I almost didn't do it," recalls Ian.

Films like *Platoon* already remind us that Vietnam was a war unlike any other. But when Ian read of American soldiers tying a Vietnamese prisoner to a tree then gouging out one of his eyeballs with a knife, before mutilating and finally killing him, he started to wonder whether this was a fit topic for a game.

But he didn't scrap his plans. Instead he incorporated a moral dimension into the plot. Ethics in computer games? In

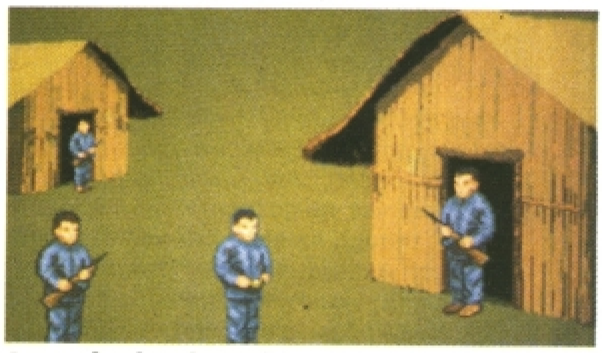


This charming 'botty bullet' was one of many ideas dropped from the game due to lack of space. Phew!

Lost Patrol you don't just shoot anonymous 'slant-eyed' sprites but you role-play. On entering a village you should interrogate the peasants. But will you become a brutal torturer like the GIs mentioned above or just ask questions and risk failing to capture a Vietcong sympathiser? It's a technique which takes the game beyond a mere test of reflexes and intellect.

Historical detail also shaped the scenario. "The game is set in 1966, when the American troops were ill-equipped for the swamps and jungles of 'Nam. At the time they didn't even have a basic jungle survival manual (one was issued a year or so later – Ian even managed to find a copy).

Other segments were changed or dropped altogether for practical reasons. "I did have a couple of ideas for a tunnel sequence but I felt I couldn't do them justice. Because of the restrictions of memory and number of disks, I was unable to put in everything I wanted to." In a perfect world Ian would



An early sketch, waiting for a jungly background for 'Johnny Gook' to hide in.

have had five disks for the Amiga, double that for the ST. But as Gary Bracey explains, multiplying the disks also multiplies the time required for copying – an important consideration when duplicators are working to the limits just before Christmas.

Obviously detailed research is unusual for a computer game. If you're converting a coin-op, you just set it for free plays and write down every stage. A film licence may take more work, reading the script, possibly even visiting the location and watching the daily 'rushes' (not to mention endless negotiations with the film company to obtain their approval for the final product). But despite spending 14 hours a day, seven days a week reading and re-designing, Ian says he loved the work. "I get the jitters when I'm away from it for too long."

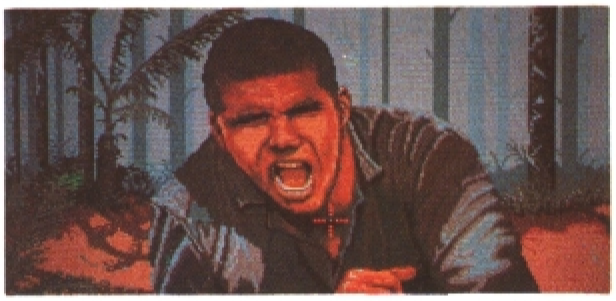
STAGE FOUR

PROGRAMMING

JULY 23 1989

Unusually Ian didn't work in close proximity to Simon Cooke, the programmer, who he eventually collaborated with on the development of *Lost Patrol*.

They live miles away so whenever Ian had an idea, he had to post details or phone Simon and describe what he wanted. Despite this eccentric method of working he reckons Simon, with whom he also collaborated on *Xenodrome*, understands just what

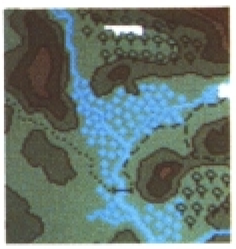


One of Ian's epic film-style screens – in this case, of a bloke who's just swallowed a rather badly seasoned hand-grenade.

he wants, adding that, "he's a brilliant programmer.

"As soon as I began with the map and controls I got Simon to do the icon controls. Then it began to come together. He began with the basics and they went through two or three changes. We had different configurations of icons and we were going to use the keyboard, but it became messy so we went for menu bars instead."

While Simon worked on the core program that would eventually hold the map section and all the arcade and mini-games together, Ian started work on the graphics. Ian used *D-Paint II* for his graphics which were drawn free-hand, though he also included digitised stills of Vietnam film footage which appear in windows to illustrate certain sequences. Like many commercial artists he used photographs for reference, lifting details from several to form the final game image.



Part of the map which forms the game's basis.

He also had the Amiga for origination. "I'm very against people using just 16 colours. We have 32 on the Amiga so I always start with it and then cut down for the ST." All the same, he reckons he used too many colours for the foreground, though the more monochrome appearance of the backgrounds certainly adds a sense of depth to his landscapes.

One way Ocean keeps in touch with a program's progress is through demos, which are also required for marketing. Unfortunately creating a demo can take up to a week of programming time and as deadlines approach and pressure increases, this may eat into schedules.

To keep *Lost Patrol* on schedule, Ian employed a second programmer to do several sequences. **Nick Byron** had only recently gone freelance but soon became "Invaluable with ideas and programming," says Ian.



Nick Byron, programmer-cum-plant.

Developing his modules on the Atari, Nick worked on the interrogation sequences as well as a couple of the arcade games. "As always with programming, there is a trade-off between what you'd like to do and what's practical. The minefield sequence originally had 120 huge sprites as the man turned through 360 degrees. A nice idea but it didn't leave much memory for anything else!"

Nick also worked on the hand-to-hand combat sequence. When you play a beat 'em up, you're probably too busy considering your next move to wonder how the computer fighter knows what to do. Actually it cheats, responding to your keyboard input. Because GIs weren't trained as Ninjas, your man has fewer acrobatic options than you'll find in Kung Fu games – though he has mastered the ancient martial art of Bah-Room Brawls – the Head-Butt!

Once a module like this is complete it can be boiler-plated into the game as a whole. Nick works on a standard ST and a very average TV set because the game has to work on the basic home set up as well as high res monitors and top of the range computers. For example, the Amiga version is tested on the 500, 2000 and 100 with any combination of drives.



Ninja GIs in a scene from the 'ballet' arcade sequence. Or possibly not...

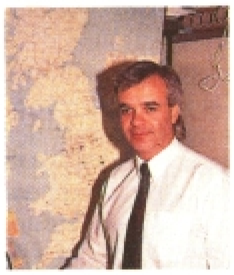
STAGE FIVE

MARKETING STRATEGIES

SEPTEMBER 13 1989

Back in Manchester, publicity person **Pam Griffith** was preparing to win the punters' hearts and minds with strategically placed propaganda in the magazines. Three months before launch Ocean aims for news stories. Four weeks later there's an all-out drive for previews. Finally, D-Day arrives and Ocean hopes to have reviews appearing as the game hits the shops; however, as magazines go to press about a month before they appear, the game has to be finished well in advance to meet deadlines. A good review can be very important, particularly with an original game like *Lost Patrol*, and careful promotion may persuade an editor to devote more space to the game particularly if it lives up to the hype.

At the same time Ocean's Sales and Marketing Manager, **Paul Patterson** is planning his campaign to put the program in the shops. "We'll go down to the distributors and have a tele-sales (the telephone sales teams who persuade shops to stock the game) presentation. We'll show it on computer if possible or take down a video and show it to them."



Paul Patterson: "It's Finland. Um... Burkina Faso? Oh, OK, I give up."



PR person Pam Griffith displaying a well-placed *Lost Patrol* ad, blissfully unaware that, back in the ZERO bunker, her lovingly-crafted press release is about to disappear forever under the crap on Dunc's 'desk'.

Paul's role is to communicate Ocean's enthusiasm for the product so that the distributor will back it with the same zeal. During the peak period before Christmas competition is intense, so Ocean reinforces its efforts with every conceivable marketing device. This Christmas Paul has opted for 18" cardboard cubes with a different Ocean game on each side, which can be used for window displays and rotated to highlight the latest release.

STAGE SIX

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

OCTOBER 26 1989

Across from Paul's office I found **Steve Blower** and the art studio. A couple of months before the main offensive, Steve and his artists will be told about the new releases and given the next few weeks to kick around their ideas. Ocean's advertising and packaging always has a distinctive look thanks to Steve's consistent use of ace illustrator **Bob Wakelin**. While Steve sometimes has input into a design, it's usually Bob who comes up with the image that sells a game from the pages of a magazine or on the shelves.



Steve Blower and some incredibly talented designers. (*Who let a designer write this caption? Ed.*)

According to Steve it takes Bob anything from a week to 10 days to produce the necessary illustration – complete with areas where the Ocean logo and game title can be superimposed for both the adverts and packaging. He usually gets to look at one of the demos but if that's not possible, he'll just apply a little artistic licence of his own.

Once the illustrations are complete, the packaging and any manuals and instructions that come with the game, are printed up. These then await packing with the finished disk before being shipped out to the shops.

STAGE SEVEN

PLAYTESTING

NOVEMBER **2** 1989

Meanwhile, deep in Ocean's basement, **Jason**, **Kane**, **Stuart**, **Kevin** and supervisor **Lee Cowley**, the crack troops of the test team, await the finished program's arrival. Their mission: to pull the game to pieces. Any sign of dodgy playability or the least hint of a bug, and they lob it back.

Playing games all day may sound like heaven but Lee has a word of warning for those of you thinking of signing up. "When I started at Ocean I was an avid games player. Now I see playing games as a job. It means staying late at night, putting your weekends out and trips to duplication plants. There's a lot more to it than people think."



Lee Cowley (centre) and some blokes who get paid to play games. Lucky sods!

STAGE EIGHT

DUPLICATION AND PROTECTION

NOVEMBER **29** 1989

Once the program's passed its physical, it enters the top secret world of copy protection. Throughout Britain there are programmers specialising in anti-piracy routines. We'd like to tell you more about these backroom boffins but for reasons of national security we're obliged to keep mum.

Production Manager, **Paul Harrison** then books a duplicator, allowing sufficient time for copying all the disks. For a large run of disks it can take anything up to a week to copy them all and stick labels on. The boxes, which have to be of a specified design or multiples like Smiths and Boots won't fit them on their shelves, are waiting to be packed. The advance orders are in.





Ever wondered what a duplicator looks like? Well... it looks like this.

STAGE NINE

DISTRIBUTION

DECEMBER **10** 1989

At last Ocean is ready to mobilise *The Lost Patrol*. Pre-sales indicate the success of the campaign. It's at this point that the game hits the shelves of your local WH Smiths, Boots or computer store complete with packaging, instructions and price tag. Re-orders may come in as early as the day after a game is shipped. Even before the software charts are published the company will know whether it has another hit on its hands. (Oddly enough, nobody at Ocean will admit to getting bored with their constant success.)

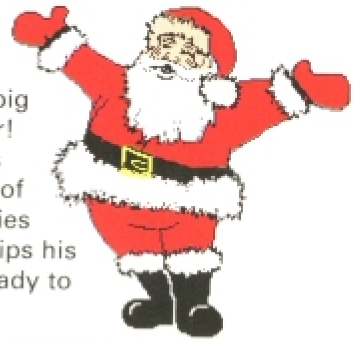
Then it's up to you, your mum, dad or friend to select the game, take it up to the counter and swop it for some cash.

STAGE TEN

THE WRAPPING

DECEMBER **24** 1989

And as copies of *The Lost Patrol* are carefully wrapped up for the 24th December, Ian Harling, Nick Byron and his Gnomes, prepare the follow-ups including a shoot 'em up by a Dutch programming team, Esoterra called *Phantasia*. A game which will feature one of his teddy bear collection. Maybe it'll be one of the big Christmas hits... next year!



Meanwhile Santa Claus packs his sack with loads of carefully wrapped up copies of *The Lost Patrol* and whips his Reindeers into action... ready to deliver his goodies.

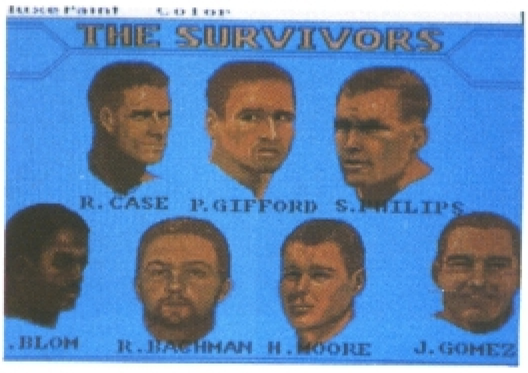
AND FINALLY...

THE PRESSIE... ERM, 'PRODUCT'

DECEMBER **25** 1989

And finally Christmas morning has arrived, you've torn open the packaging and slipped the disk into your computer ready for action...

Gee – did you have fun the last couple of days? Living it up in the city. For a while you almost forgot the jungles of 'big muddy', the humidity, the insects... the constant threat of death from the Vietcong. Suddenly, an explosion. The sound of rending metal followed by an eerie silence. Just the rushing of the wind as the chopper plummets to earth. You brace yourself for the impact...



Oh oh, chaps – looks like we've got recycled turkey for lunch yet again...

1966 and America has sent 30,000 troops into 'Nam to help stem the tide of world communism. It is a war they cannot win. The Vietnamese are masters of jungle fighting. Gunfire comes out of nowhere. Their soldiers vanish into a labyrinth of tunnels. You stumble across a trip-wire and lose your legs in the explosion that follows.

Seven men survive the helicopter crash. As the senior officer it's your duty to lead them through 57 miles of hostile country. Choose your route carefully on the map screen as the fastest route may not always be the safest.

You may choose to enter the villages in search of food. Will you interrogate the peasants as well? How much force will you use to discover their secrets? Is that harmless old woman hiding a machine gun in her bundle? Decisions such as these make up *Lost Patrol*'s five strategic sub-games. Then there are the unplanned encounters, the arcade segments. Can you kill a VC scout in hand-to-hand combat without alerting his comrades? Pick a path through a minefield with your bayonet (fail and at least your friends will see you had guts)? Dodge the gunfire as you cross a paddy field or pick off a sniper? Defend yourself in a farmhouse against a VC patrol?



Hurrah! A hotel! Let's hope the barman can do snakebites...



You'll have to keep an eye on your ammo and rations. Most of all observe the human element. Choose your marching order carefully because some soldiers make better scouts than others. And some you can't afford to lose. Maintain your men's morale and you may just make it across that hell to headquarters. Fail and you become just another name on a Washington memorial. STOP

VIRGIN's SANTA

FREE GAMES THIS WAY

Don't miss out on an extra special stocking this Christmas when Santa w be awarding the lucky winners with:

5 FIRST PRIZES OF

£1,000 worth of software of your choice, or an Amiga or ST plus £500 wor of software of your choice

10 SECOND PRIZES OF

£500 worth of software of your choice

20 THIRD PRIZES OF

£250 worth of software of your choice

1000 RUNNER UP PRIZES TOO!

Any one of the six Virgin Games arcade classics mentioned earlier.

MAKE SURE SANTA VISITS YOU TWICE THIS YEAR!

HERE WE GO! ....

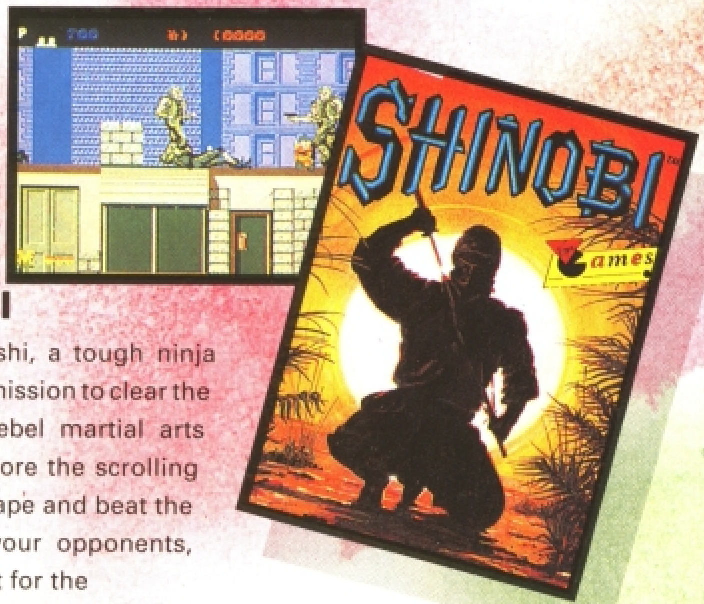
Virgin Games have decided to become a Santa and hand out £30,000 worth of fabulous goodies. All you have to do to gain from Santa's generosity is to buy any three of these games:

SHINOBI
DOUBLE DRAGON II
GEMINI WING
CONTINENTAL CIRCUS
SILKWORM
NINJA WARRIORS

Simply collect three tokens - you'll find one in each game - and send them to Virgin Games. The prize draw will take place on 29th January 1990.

WIN £30,000 WORTH OF PRIZES

discover why!



SHINOBI

You're masashi, a tough ninja warrior on a mission to clear the town from rebel martial arts fanatics. Explore the scrolling urban landscape and beat the hell out of your opponents, but watch out for the end-of-level guardians.



SILKWORM

It's not true! Even after months of negotiation with the Ruskies and despite a mass exodus out of Afghanistan, we're still under threat. There's no one left to press the Nuke button so the battle has switched to copters and plane. Non-stop shoot-'em-up arcade action.



CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

Compete in formula one races in Brazil, America, France, Monaco, Germany, Spain and Japan, Race hard, but watch out for other cars. Colliding can be fatal. And do visit the pits for fuel and repairs.



GEMINI WING

The aliens have had enough. They're not going to take their brethren being blasted on computer screen any more. So they've come down in their hordes to blast the pitiful race of carbon-based life forms called humans. Can you stop them? Somebody has to do it.



NINJA WARRIORS

Can you survive brutal enemy onslaught? Fight with hand, foot and dagger to rid the street of the scum that dare infest your home town. A classic arcade conversion.



DOUBLE DRAGON II

Ferocious two-player simultaneous martial arts mayhem. Evil fiends have captured your girlfriend - it's up to you and your brother to rescue her. Don't fail. Through the town, countryside, mountains and finally into the lair. Use whatever weapons you can find to stay alive.

ALL AVAILABLE ON

AMIGA	£19.99
ATARI ST	£19.99
C64 DISK	£14.99
C64 CASS	£9.99
SPECTRUM CASS	£9.99
SPECTRUM +3 DISK	£14.99
AMSTRAD CASS	£9.99
AMSTRAD DISK	£14.99

Virgin Games

VIRGIN GAMES
2-4 VERNON YARD
119 PORTOBELLO ROAD
LONDON W11 2DX

review

HARD DRIVIN'

The most talked about arcade machine has been hacked into little pieces and squeezed into the ST. *Duncan MacDonald* clambers into the driver's seat. (Oh, and puts his seat-belt on.)



Blinking Nora, there's a blooming great loop coming up in the road. There weren't any instructions on how to cope with this in the highway code manual.

If you've been in an arcade this summer you might have spotted a large group of people standing around something. If you'd pushed your way through you would have found, not a couple of blokes in the middle of a fist-fight, but a big red cabinet. If you'd looked at the top of the cabinet you'd have seen the words *HARD DRIVIN'*. And if you'd looked inside, you'd have seen someone with one hand on a steering wheel, the other hand on a gear stick and the other hand reaching into a pocket searching for another pound coin. (*Are you quite sure about that third hand? Ed.*)

***Hard Drivin'*, a fast moving, solid-filled vector graphic racing game, gave you the chance to compete (against the clock) on two separate tracks: a speed track and a stunt track. And for those skilled enough to get a good enough time on either of these, there was a championship lap against the computer controlled car – the Phantom Photon. The fact that the graphics were solid-filled vectors wasn't the only thing that made this game stand out. There was something else: two way traffic, just like a real road. Plus you weren't restricted to just driving clockwise or counter-clockwise: you could go in any direction you wanted. (Although the computer only lets you drive for 10 seconds off the track.) It was weird watching the way different people played the game, although it was probably the same way they drove in real life. I saw one bloke driving slowly behind one of the computer cars, doing about 40 mph. There was a really long clear stretch of road in front of him but he didn't overtake: oh no, instead he just tagged quietly along behind this other car until his timer ran out. He played, in this way, three more times before leaving the arcade with a shrug of the shoulders and a bemused expression on his face. What a prat!**



WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Hard Drivin'
PUBLISHER	Tengen
PRICE	£19.99/£19.99/£24.99
FORMAT	ST/Amiga/PC
RELEASED	Out Now



ST

Dunc: It might be a good idea to begin this review with a sample lap (with you in the passenger seat). Clamber in then. Oi, put your seatbelt on – if the Old Bill pulls me up and you're not wearing it, I'll get done as as well. Besides, there's every likelihood that I'm going to crash – and as I'm not insured for this thing. Okay – ignition on. Hold tight. GO!!

"Phew, this is a pretty good rendition of the arcade experience. Not as much detail, but it's *nearly* all there. The road doesn't seem to be moving very fast. Look at that speedo – 70 miles per hour. Seems more like 40. Still, I'll turn left at the fork in the road and take the Speed Track. Hold on to your tum, chum, we're about to hit a bump. Bluuuurgh. Oh, a downhill stretch with a sharp right-hand corner at the bottom. Oh, and a house. Blimey, what a stupid place to build a house – right on the apex of a bend. Suppose I'd better slow down: just hold down the brake and.... 65, 60, 55, 50 – yikes, not soon enough. Looks like I'm going to be parking in somebody's kitchen. Kaboom! Ho hum, I think I'll have a crack at the Stunt Track this time. (Car does a 180° turn and motors back to the fork in the road.) Off we go again, to the right this time. Oh look, the *Hard Drivin'* 'cow'. Normally I'd veer off the road and give it a halogen main beam headlight bulb up the jacksy, but my timer's running down and I've got an urgent appointment with the first checkpoint. Over the crest of the drop, round a corner bridge with jump-ramp ahoy, and a speedsign for 60 miles an hour. Hey, nobody tells ME what to do. (*Oh no, he's going to crash again. Ed.*) Foot to the floor: I'm going to take this jump in style, hold tight – oh dear, I've mucked up the steering, 90 miles an hour and I'm going to hit the concrete support post. Kaboom. Urk."

The first thing that strikes me about the ST *Hard Drivin'* is the control sensitivity. Things feel slightly over-responsive – you find yourself oversteering all over the shop: weaving from side to side – off the road, on the road, off the road, back on the road etc. It's the same in the coin-op, to a certain extent: but with a steering wheel these cock-ups are easier to correct.

Once you've cracked the control method however, the game starts to open up. As on a real road, there are other vehicles to contend with – but the realism is taken a stage further as not all the vehicles are travelling in your direction. So staying on the correct side

of the road is quite a good idea. The animation of the oncoming traffic is slower than in the coin-op, especially on the lorries – they seem to be doing 10 miles per hour. Avoiding them is tricky – given the awkward control response. If you miss something, chances are you'll go into a series of skids and attempted corrections, that'll eat into your time or make you crash.

HASSLE FACTOR: 1
Hard to control, makes for Harder Drivin' than it should.

Once (or indeed 'if') you find yourself able to 'cut the mustard' on the Stunt Track, the real fun starts. Get a good enough qualifying time and you'll be allowed to enter the Championship Lap, which means that the Stunt Track is cleared of all other traffic except for yourself and the 'Photon Phantom' – a shimmery blue (and rather spooky) ghost-like car. The first time you race against the Phantom, it follows a set route at a set speed. If you beat it, the computer will remember your route and speed and allocate them to the Photon Phantom. This means that the next Championship Lap will find you, quite literally, racing yourself. Beat the Phantom again and your new route and speed will overwrite the previous one. So as you get better, the competition gets better (because the competition is actually yourself). Plus, you can save this Phantom data to disk and hand it to someone else, who can load it into their computer and give you the race of a lifetime: without you even being there.

The conversion of *Hard Drivin'* overall, is actually rather excellent. Top marks there. You get the same sort of feel as in the coin-op, and even the tiny touches such as the cow mooing (when you crash into it) have been retained. I've got a 'but' though. There's not a great deal of lastability – just the same as the coin-op itself. Once you've mastered both the tracks, that's, erm, 'it' really. The inclusion of the Photon Phantom 'race against yourself' option adds quite a bit, but I still have my doubts about the extra 'play' it's going to wring from the game. If car games are your forté then don't miss it!



Hmm. Do I go for manual or automatic transmission? (*It might be a good idea to go for driving lessons instead. Ed.*)



Blimey, that bridge doesn't look quite finished. Oh no, I've got to go over it on the next lap.



Cor, I handled that pretty well, don't you think? (*No. Ed.*)

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	89
S	SOUND	84
A	ADDICTIVENESS	80
E	EXECUTION	85

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

Brilliant conversion of a graphically brilliant coin-op. It's great fun for a while, but don't expect it to be the 'most played' game you ever bought.

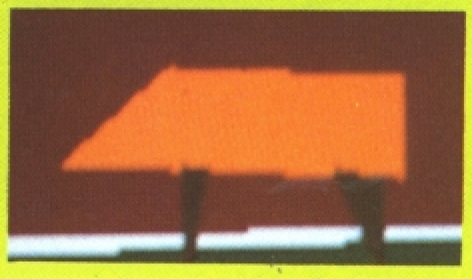
82

SAVE ALAN THE FRIESIAN

Pictured below are two cows. One is the *Hard Drivin'* cow while the other is Alan, a fresian from Farmer Pete's steak and kidney pie farm.

We struck a deal with Farmer Pete – he's agreed to free Alan (i.e. not to kill him and stick him in a pie) if you can answer a simple question correctly. Write your answer on the back of a postcard and send it to Save Alan The Fresian, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE. Here's the question: "Which is the *Hard Drivin'* cow, the one on the left or the one on the right?"





STOP

review

TOWER OF BABEL

Biblical settings are a bit of a rarity in computer games but somehow Pete Cooke has combined the post-Noah era and the usual alien invasion scenario. *Johnboy Davies* gets out his Bible and space suit and goes hunting Rapunzel.



Looks like the Anti-Arachnid Liberation Movement might have beaten you to it. There's no 'pool' below and poor old Pusher is about to take the plunge.

As you may have deduced from the title, this game centres around the tower of Babel, built by the Shinarians thousands of years ago in an effort to communicate with God. What the Bible didn't mention however, was that the Zentorians from the planet Zentor (quelle surprise), took an interest and sent a team of spider-like robots down to lend a hand.

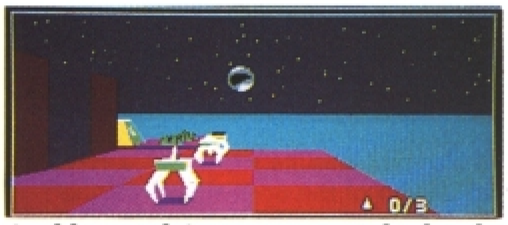
The Zentorians and the Shinarians got on like a house on fire until the robots decided it was high time to be getting back and tried to climb to the top of the tower of Babel to signal to Zentor. A minority of Shinarians decided to put a stop to this, much to the disgust of the rest and rigged up a load of traps and puzzles on the tower. Once the spiders had realised what was going on, it was too late. They were trapped! Blimey. Siding with the underdogs as always, you take control of the three spiders – Zapper, Pusher and Grabber who may sound like Grange Hill Bullies but are in fact very nice arachnids once you get to know them.



Zapper relaxes in an old Conran chair.

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Tower Of Babel
PUBLISHER	Microprose
PRICE	£24.99
FORMAT	ST/Amiga
RELEASED	ST: Out now Amiga: January



Grabber and Co en route to the local wine bar. But does it serve spiders?

Jonathan: *Tower Of Babel* is a highly original 3D puzzle / shoot 'em up / you-name-it-up game with enormous scope. The graphics are the solid 3D type that now seem to be becoming the norm, with multiple camera angles and all the rest of it. They do their job and some of the colour schemes can be quite fetching, but they're hardly *Babel's* strongest selling point. What's most important is the depth of the game. All the towers are split up into lots of sub-towers and to get through each one you need to attain a particular goal. This might be to collect energy pods, or simply to shoot a certain number of baddies. Whatever it is, there's plenty to do.

Fortunately, each of the spiders you control can be programmed with a number of moves and can then be told to run the program while you go and do something else. This is particularly useful when you need two or more spiders to do things simultaneously. Alternatively, for a bit of light relief, you could progam them to do silly dances or wipe each other out, then retire to a safe distance and watch the fun.

HASSLE FACTOR:
When you get stuck, you really get stuck and it don't half hurt. That's probably th intention so I'll kindly let them of

But one wrong move can completely balls up the whole puzzle, giving you no option but to restart and lose five points. Life is made harder by the large range of baddies, both mobile and stationary. In fact, the number of different problems you'll come up against is almost infinite, especially when you consider the editor. Oh. Didn't I mention the editor?

Right. Part of the package is a very comprehensive editor which lets you design your own towers, right down to the colours used. To some, this could be even more fun than playing the game itself and it means a whole lot more bytes per pound. What's more, you can save your creations to disk and foist them upon your friends.

Tower Of Babel takes a lot of manual digesting and stamina to get into but once you do, it's actually very difficult to stop playing. It's just the kind of game the 16-bits are best at – massively complicated, lots of built-on extras and wazzy graphics to boot. It's not for the switch on and blast brigade but is essential for anyone else.

GRAPHICS 84 ADDICTIVENESS 92
SOUND 55 EXECUTION 88
OVERALL 89

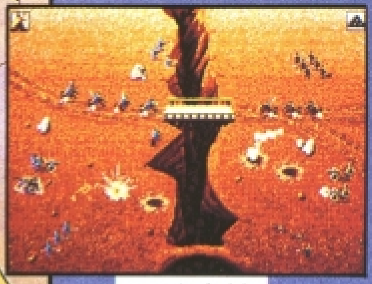




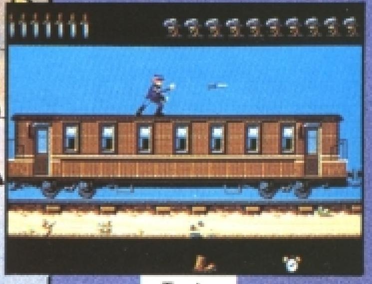
Strategic map



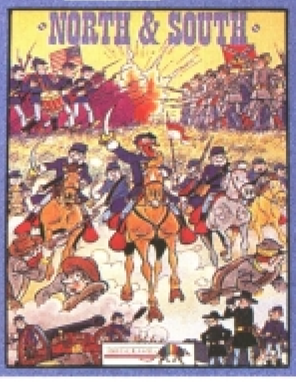
Fort



Battle field



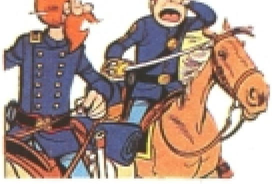
Train



NORTH & SOUTH



CHAAARGE !!! Dive into the hilarious world of the Belgium comic book "LES TUNIQUES BLEUES" (CAUVIN & LAMBIL). For one or two players, you are either Yankee or Confederate, so re-creating the true atmosphere of the American Civil War. NORTH & SOUTH, an original, explosive cocktail of strategy and arcade. Surround your enemy using the strategic map of the American East Coast. Crush them on the super arcade battle field. Send your best men to stop the gold-filled trains, and then rush the forts to free the enemy occupied towns. NORTH & SOUTH, a game filled with options. Start the game from a choice of four different years, three levels of difficulty and a special disaster mode which includes violent storms stopping all movement of troops, re-inforcements arriving from Europe, and not forgetting the Indians and Mexicans whose only pleasure in life is attacking you !



If that wasn't enough to wet your appetite, you can also choose between a "strategy-only" game and an "strategy-arcade game", and with the superb 2 players version that has to be played to be believed, it only leaves us to give the order "To your sabres !!"

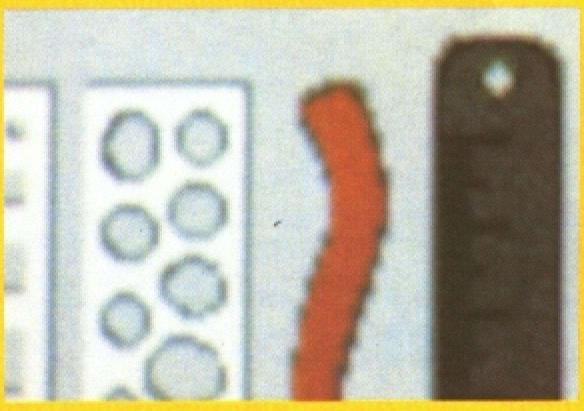
Available on AMIGA, ATARI ST 2 DISKS, PC compatibles 2 DISKS.

INFOGRAMES



Zut alors! *Alan 'Matisse' Tomkins* regarde *ZZ Rough*, le nouveau package d'art sur le ST.

The French eh? They're quite an artistic bunch really aren't they? What with their 'left bank', the Louvre and Toulouse-Lautrec, you'd have thought they had enough art to keep them going well into next lunchtime at least. But no, they're still churning out new artists and art packages and their latest, *ZZ Rough*, is a brilliantly innovative new paint package which differs from most others (where most of the painting is done in 'zoom' mode), by letting you do most of the painting on the full screen. Those of you who are 'novices' to computer art will find this much easier than the usual packages. Just take a look...



Some cunning new devices for measuring the 'girth' of your 'thingy'.



All the pens under the sun... What more could you ask?

Open up *ZZ Rough* and you'll find yourself clutching two disks and a hefty 95 page manual. The first disk contains the program itself, a 3D object library, and printer drivers, while the second is crammed full of demonstration art files and tutorials. The 95 page manual may seem a bit of a chore at first glance, but it's very clear and concise, (each tool has a page of its own, with a description of its function, use and the tricks it can perform) well laid out and doesn't bog you down with a ton of irrelevant information.

Get *ZZ Rough* up and running, and the first thing that hits you is the smart modern layout of the primary function screen. Sitting in the upper centre are ten miniature overlapping work screens (four if you have a 520) and running across the bottom of the screen are all the different tool icons you can use. At each side of the screen are two large boxes, the left one containing text, ruler, circles, boxes, arrows, and freehand pencil, whilst the one on the right is full of pencils, chalk, and felt tip pens, along with the palette for colours.

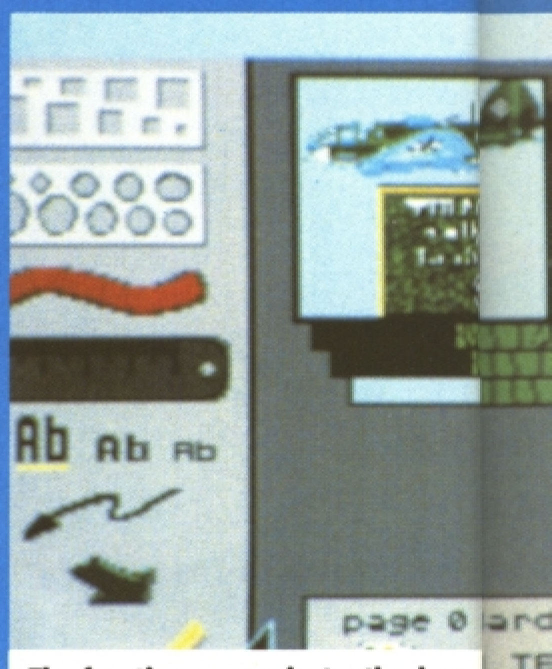
ZZ Rough lets you load and save in seven different formats, and the ability to import CAD 3D files is brilliant. Printer support is fair, the Cannon FP, and PJ, NEC, Star, and Xerox 4020 are all catered for, but to print out a picture you must first quit the art program, and load a separate printer program. A little yawnsome to say the least.

Like most other ST packages *ZZ Rough* also uses a two screen system – a work screen on which you actually paint, and a function screen from which you choose your tools. I personally hate this sort of system, as toggling between the two screens takes you away from your picture. But *ZZ Rough* at least compromises by displaying a miniature version of your work on the function screen at all times – just point and click to access it.

QUICK ON THE DRAW

The main drawing tools in this package are called Tracers, of which there are five in all. A Pencil which simulates colour pencil sketching, the colour being selected from the colour box. A Ball Point Pen whose function should be obvious, and a Black Marker – for inking your image. (Other Markers are available too, in different thicknesses and colours, and all are remarkably like using felt-tip markers.) There's also a Chalk which allows you to obtain very subtle shades of colour with a very dry chalk look, whilst the Stump lets you tone down the intensity of colours. What is most remarkable about *ZZ Rough* though, is that if you go over a colour, let's say light green for example, it'll get darker just as in real life.

Text is surprisingly limited however, only the standard Degas type font is provided. But there are lots of Rulers for straight and flexible lines, circles, ellipses, squares, and rectangles. And though I found this a strange way of presenting these functions, they all work surprisingly well.



The function screen instantly shows the modern style that runs through *Rough*. To the left are the drawing aids, to the right the pencils, pens and chalk. In the middle are the miniature work screens, and along the bottom the specialised function items.

ZZ RO

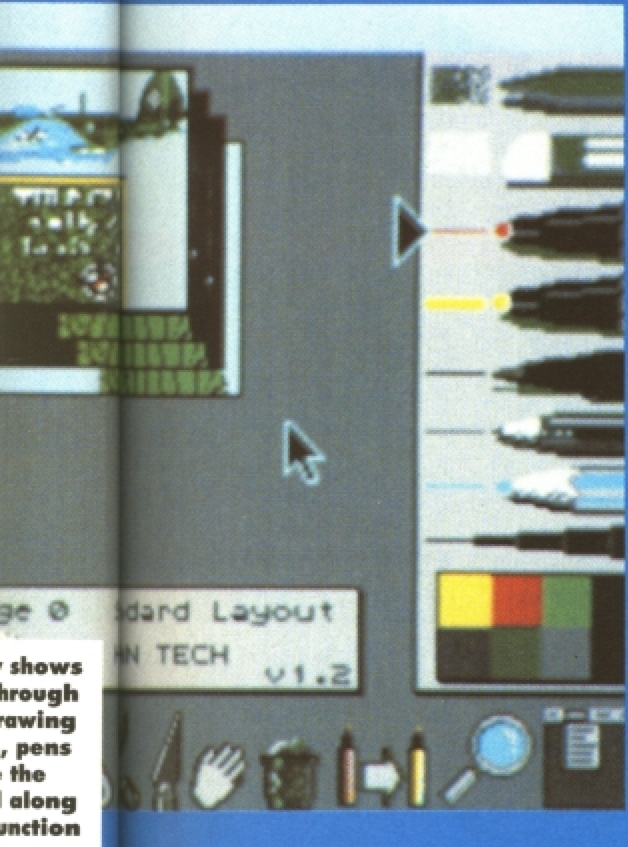
SPECIALITIES OF THE HOUSE

In addition to the normal range of tools there are Special Tools available too. The first of these is the Photo Copier – a cut and paste function. User defined size, or whole page cut and paste is supported, and you can copy a page with or without its palette.

The 3D library is a very surprising but welcome inclusion, with on-screen



Oh dear... Marine Boy seems to have munched his way through 90 packets of Aunty Gertie's 'Oestrogen tablets' and has become 'Aqua Girl' for his troubles.



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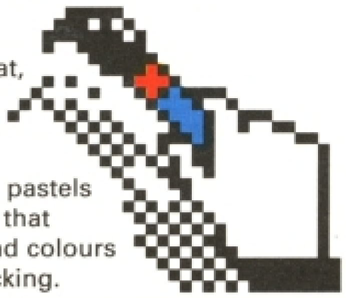
cones, boxes and triangles that can be resized and reshaped by clicking on the function box. The nice thing about this function is that the images can be displayed in either wireframe, or filled in solid graphics. But the clever bit is that you can import three dimensional objects created with Cyber's CAD 3D. And once they've been imported, they can then be rescaled and repositioned at will. This function is a major buying point, even for those of you who already have heaps of art packages, and it's so easy to use that even newcomers will find few problems.

There are loads of other Special Tools too: the Mask tool, which is used for hiding part of the screen from pen actions (but this can only be pulled across the screen box fashion); the Eraser, which has user defined sizing and wipes out one selected colour or all colours; the Scissors, which are used to cut and keep a part of the drawing in memory, and as long as you don't leave the current screen you can repaste it at any time; Glue, which is used with the Scissors, and lets you paste with opaque, transparent, or reverse; the Cutter, which allows you to horizontally erase all the colours located between the black marker lines (this works very well when getting rid of felt-lines that have strayed over the edge of an outlined image that you are painting); the Hand, which is for moving the entire page on the screen; Trash, which is for erasing one or all pages in the memory and finally Colour Changing, which lets you replace a colour inside a defined surface – great for getting rid of the black marker lines.

MOVE CLOSER

Now we come to the make or break point of any art package – the Magnify function. As soon I clamped eyes on *ZZ Rough's* zoom I took a dislike to it. The whole thing covers half the screen and the zoom window takes up half of this area. The pixels are outlined to ease placement, but when using pastel shades you tend to lose sight of individual pixels. If you want to zoom a part of the screen that is hidden, you need to use the Grabber. Had it not been for the nature of *ZZ Rough* enabling you to paint without the zoom, this could have been its downfall.

But the plusses of *ZZ Rough* far outweigh the minuses, and it's apparent that a lot of thought has gone into this package. *ZZ Rough* approaches computer painting from a new angle. It sets out to simulate art in the real world of pen and ink, and in so far as this is possible on a computer, it has succeeded. It's easy to use, nice to look at, has a large choice of pen styles, textures and pastels and the way that you can blend colours is gob- smacking.





to have
packets
tablets'
for his

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	ZZ Rough
PUBLISHER	Signa Publishing
PRICE	£34.95
FORMAT	ST Only
RELEASED	Out Now



The first step in creating a *ZZ Rough* sketch, is the rough sketching of the image. Don't worry about looks at this stage, a near likeness will do.



Now using the Black Marker, outline the border and any other details that are to be included. Hitting F4 will hide the rough sketching so that only the inking is visible.



This is the colouring stage. Don't worry about going over the ink lines, as it's at this stage that you'll notice the colours blending as you go over them.



Time to get rid of all those unwanted streaks of colour outside the inklines next. Start at the top and run the Eraser down the screen.



Use a mixture of chalks and felt tips to create a nice textured background, then bring the background to the work screen using the Photo Copier. The picture is almost complete.



Final highlights are added, and the last retouching done. Now it's time to add some text, then just sit back and admire your latest masterpiece.

CHOCKS AWAY!

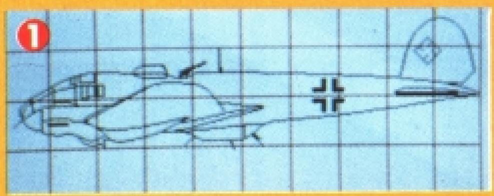
No, no, no, not the chocolatey kind, I mean the flying kind. Up into the wild blue yonder and all that kind of bally hoo. Yes I love flight simulators, and one of the newest ones to be hitting our runways soon will be *Their Finest Hour* from Lucasfilm – a sim which'll let you take part in The Battle Of Britain in either a fighter or a bomber plane. It promises to be a stormer. So to get you into the spirit of things, I thought I'd spend this month's tutorial showing you how to draw a plane which actually took part in The Battle Of Britain – the Heinkel 111H3.

First things first though, before you start to draw any object, it's a good idea to research your subject. The best place to research World War II aircraft is the Royal Air Force Museum at Hendon in London. Not all of us live near London though, so a trip to the local library to look at some old history books should do the job. Once you've selected a suitable picture it's down to business.

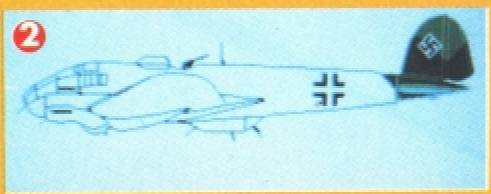
1) Firstly, draw a grid of 16 x 16 pixels on the screen.
2) Then transfer the grid to the picture using tracing paper and draw the outline on the screen, using a different colour to the grid. It's important to try to be as exact as possible.
3) Once you are happy with the result, fill the grid with the transparent colour and then redraw the gaps.
4) Now select a palette and paint only a small section of the screen. By doing this you can make alterations to your colour palette as you go along.
5) Next, using the Zoom mode draw the areas where there are colour changes and place areas of detail, such as lettering and windows.
6) Now you're in a postion to fill in any larger areas, and when you've done that you can use the Zoom again to work on any outstanding smaller areas, correct any mistakes in the outline, and add all the anti-aliasing pixels.
7) Once you're happy with the result the plane is finished and all that remains is to add a box with the squadron sign, together with details of the plane (the text was created using the process outlined in last month's tutorial).

Now it's your turn and I've got a copy of *Their Finest Hour* up for grabs for the person who sends in the best drawing of any plane from the Battle Of Britain. Use any package you like to create your picture, but don't just copy this tutorial's picture, try and inject your own ideas and style. The winner and the best of the rest will be published, so get cracking and send your masterpieces to **Their Finest Hour Competition, Artifacts, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.** Closing date for entries is January 31st 1990.

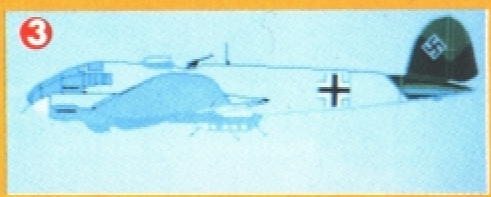
FLIGHT MANUAL



Draw a grid of 16 x 16 pixels, then draw the outline and any other details, such as engines and wings. Try to be accurate, but remember that alterations will be made later.



The tail is painted in detail, this is done to make sure that you have got the palette right. As you can see, the shape of the tail plane has been corrected and any jagged edges have been smoothed out by anti-aliasing.



Now you add the blue sections, mainly the underbody and glass. Keep the detail to a minimum at this stage, because you're still developing the shape.

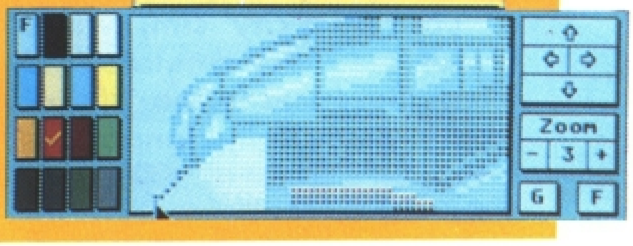


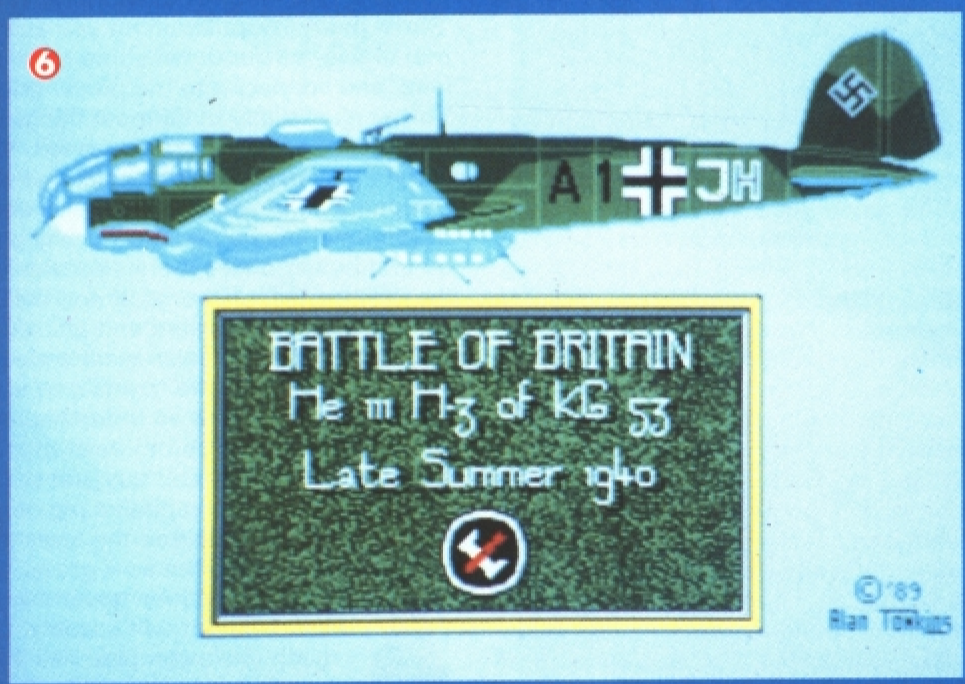
Now add the lines where there is any colour change, plus the placement of all windows and text. As you can see, your bomber is now beginning to take shape.



The large areas of colour are filled in, and the Zoom is used to complete any small areas. Now's the time to retouch any areas that you're not happy with and when that's done the plane is almost complete.







And here's one I made earlier. Simply add the fancy dressing, in this case a box with the Squadron sign, and text created by yourself and post your compo entry off to the address given above.

DRAW TO A CLOSE

And that about wraps it up for this month. Don't forget, as well as entering this month's competition, to send all your other pictures (enclosing a stamped addressed envelope if you want them returned) to The Gallery. The best one each month will win a rather brilliant ZERO badge. I also want your hints and tips for creating your own pictures, plus if you've had a problem with an art package, let's hear from you, and I'll try to sort it out. Just write to me, Alan Tomkins, Artifacts, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.

STOP

SIM CITY

Ever wanted to run the world? Now's your chance. *Sim City*, Infogrames' latest game, is an incredibly sophisticated 'build your own city' sim, where your computer emulates the changing faces in the 'life' of a city. *Sean Kelly* donned his mayor's chain of office and settled down to battle it out against inner-city housing hassle, traffic problems, crime and bad rail links. Blimey!



1 Shown across the top are your city's name, the date and the budget remaining.

2 Useful messages like this sometimes pop up here.

3 Click the budget bar and a menu offers various graphs – predicting for example, the levels of pollution, crime, end-of-the-worlds etc. expected in the next 120 years. Yikes!

4 A large and traffic-packed roadway, handy for the toddlers of the lovely high-density housing estate nearby.

5 The railway line, with about as many trains as British Rail (i.e. none).

6 A commercial zone, signified by the blue border, where 'Sims' buy Simfood, see Simfilms and do other Simmy things.



Downtown Detroit in the slump of 1972, one of the 10 scenarios included with the game. Others include Hamburg after the 1944 bombing and, erm, Bonn's traffic problems. What interesting places to live!

ZERO HERO

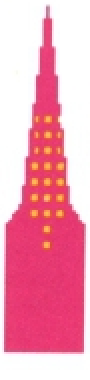
"If I ruled the world, every day would be the first day of spring, every tax form much happiness would bring, every... (*Snip! Ed.*) Hem hem.

Sim City is a 'build your own city sim' in which you play a mayor with your own plot of land, on which you must gradually build a metropolis.

The game begins with the computer generating a terrain upon which you can build yourself a village; how quickly this grows is down to your own good sense and planning. It's a completely mouse-driven game, and all the necessary Bob McAlpine Junior-style building commands ('bulldoze land', 'build road', 'destroy beauty-spot' etc.) are accessed from an icon menu to your right.

Once an icon has been selected, the pointer becomes a large square, equalling the size of the area needed for that particular action. So for example, if you want to build a power station, the pointer will become about three by three centimetres square and you must find a space on your land equalling that size before you can plonk your power station down. Remember that the area you see on screen is actually only a small part of the whole playing area though. So you can scout around a bit before planting your power stations and roads in place.

To begin building your little empire, firstly you'll need a power source. Next you'll need to find somewhere for your 'Sims' (that's 'population' to you and me) to live, so put down some housing land, and connect it to the power grid. You don't actually build most things but merely designate certain areas for certain purposes. For example, if you designate somewhere as a 'residential development zone', your Sims will get on and build houses there – provided they're needed, of course. If not, then the land will stay wasted and unused. Your population will also want a place to work (unless they're 'crims'), so next you should designate an industrial zone and also a commercial zone where they can buy and sell things (the capitalist pig-dogs).



That gives you the basis of your town, but as it grows, the laws and actions governing its development will become much more complex. As the population increases so does the number of cars – and traffic becomes a problem, along with housing and crime

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Sim City
PUBLISHER	Infogrames
PRICE	£29.95
FORMAT	ST/Amiga/PC
RELEASED	ST/Amiga: Out now PC: Spring 1990



THE ICONS

- **A** Bulldoze land
- **B** Build road
- **C** Build railway
- **D** Build power line
- **E** Build parkland
- **F** Assign residential zone
- **G** Assign commercial zone
- **H** Assign industrial zone
- **I** Build fire department
- **J** Build police department
- **K** Build power station
- **L** Build football stadium
- **M** Build airport
- **N** Build port
- **O** Non-functional

and pollution and... So loads of different factors must be taken into account as you make a decision to remedy each problem, each one more complex than the last.

At any point in the game, you can call upon a 'poll' which indicates what percentage of the population thinks you're doing well, and what the Sims regard as the major problems in the city. This allows you to take steps to improve the standards for your population (or, if you're feeling in a particularly nasty mood, worsen their standards and make their lives hell). In addition, a large number of graphs, indicating everything from police influence to land prices, can also be accessed at any time during the game.

Just about all city life seems to be integrated in *Sim City*, and it's down to you to solve any problems which might arise, firstly by forward planning and secondly by 'corrective' planning – bulldozing parks and building railway lines for example. Once you have the hang of it, you can take on one of the 10 'scenarios' included, which allow you to attempt to solve past and future problems enountered in cities the world over. Pass the bricks and mortar, mum...

Sean: Considering the depth and level of sophistication in *Sim City* it's suprisingly easy to get into. At first I thought I was in for a straightforward and rather tedious game, but after a few minutes of playing I was hooked. Once you see your city begin to grow on your monitor, it's very difficult to tear yourself away. The prevailing thought is to have just one more year, and then one more... It's absolutely brilliant.

The way that problems of city development are simulated are excellent. Take tax, for example. If you increase taxation for a little while to provide the funds to build a port, it'll bring in more trade given time. But raise the tax too high and this'll cause mass migration from your city, and you'll have less revenue than before. Keep it too low and your city will stagnate. What a conundrum, eh?

So gameplay is brill, but what of sound and graphics? Well sound is pretty lousy, but then thankfully it's not really essential for a game like this. It would have been nice to be able to hear the 'city noises' such as traffic, trains and planes as your city developed, but no such luck. As for the graphics, they're well presented and thoughtfully designed. And when you take into account the complex nature of this simulation, the mouse-driven menus and icons are suprisingly clear and easy to use. In fact it's a modern feat of engineering that Infogrames has managed to squeeze so much into 500K.

It has to be noted however, that there are a few bugs in *Sim City*, some of which can be a major pain in the bot. Once, after several hours of building, the game slapped a huge black square across the monitor. At various other times it just locked up. Providing you save your city every half hour or so, these shouldn't be too much trouble, and although they sound terrible, the game is still excellent.

It's difficult to explain why *Sim City* is so appealing. Perhaps it's because you're given the chance to 'prove' you've got what it takes to run peoples' lives in an efficient manner. Perhaps it's just megalomania. (*Yup. Ed.*) Whatever the reasons, *Sim City* will stay in your disk drive for a very, very long time.

HASSLE FACTOR: 4
A couple of bugs cause the game to lock up occasionally.

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	90
S	SOUND	40
A	ADDICTIVENESS	95
E	EXECUTION	92

A sophisticated simulation, highly polished with broad appeal and tons of addictiveness.

92

STOP



1) Aha! This unspoilt beauty spot seems a good site for a massive nuclear power station. Should add a bit of 'sparkle' to the local drinking water, too. What a philanthropist I am! Time passes...



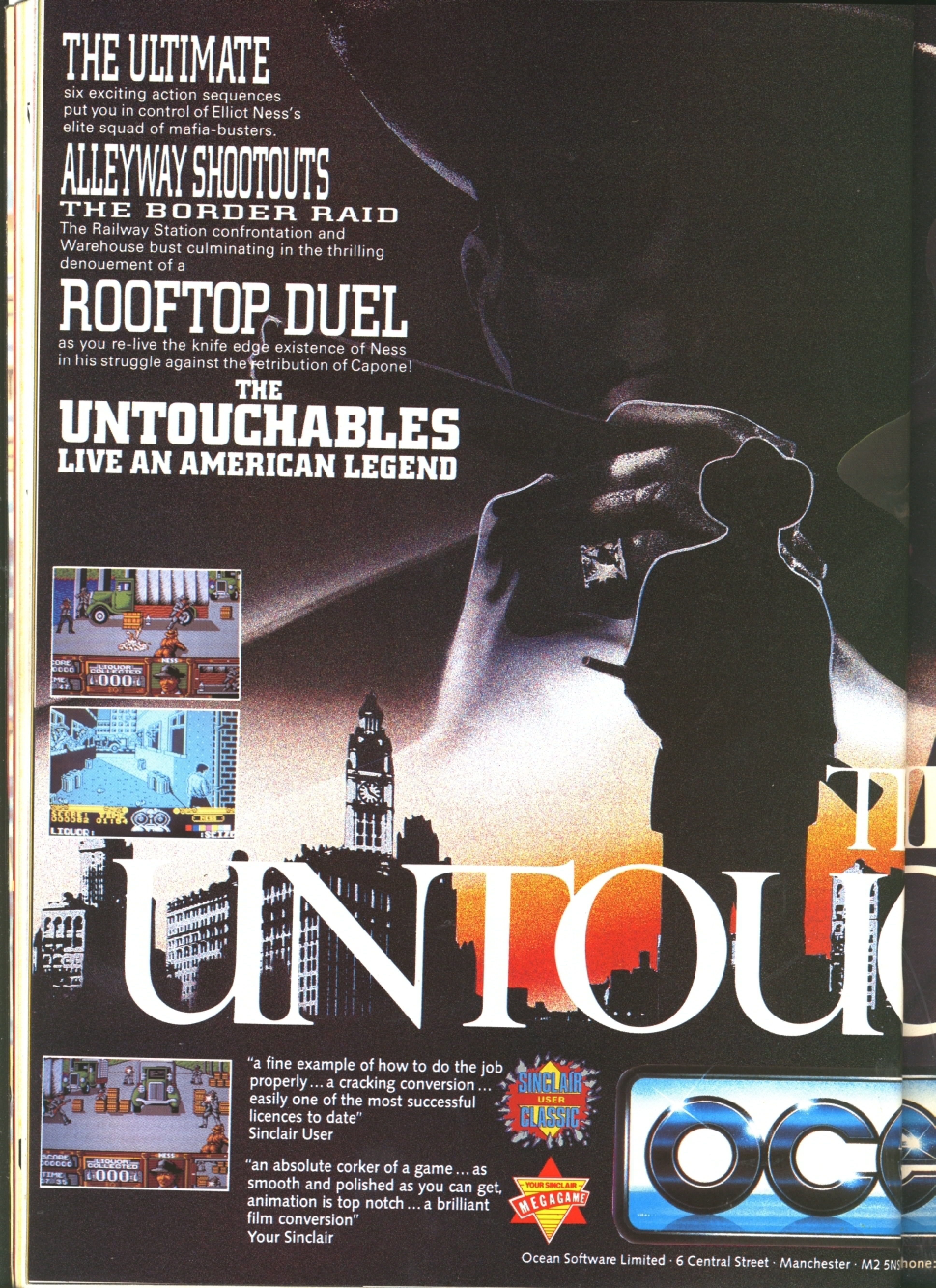
2) Blimey! 10 years on, and I've slapped up residential and industrial zones, and connected them to the power station. People have moved in already, but why? It's utterly crap! Time passes...

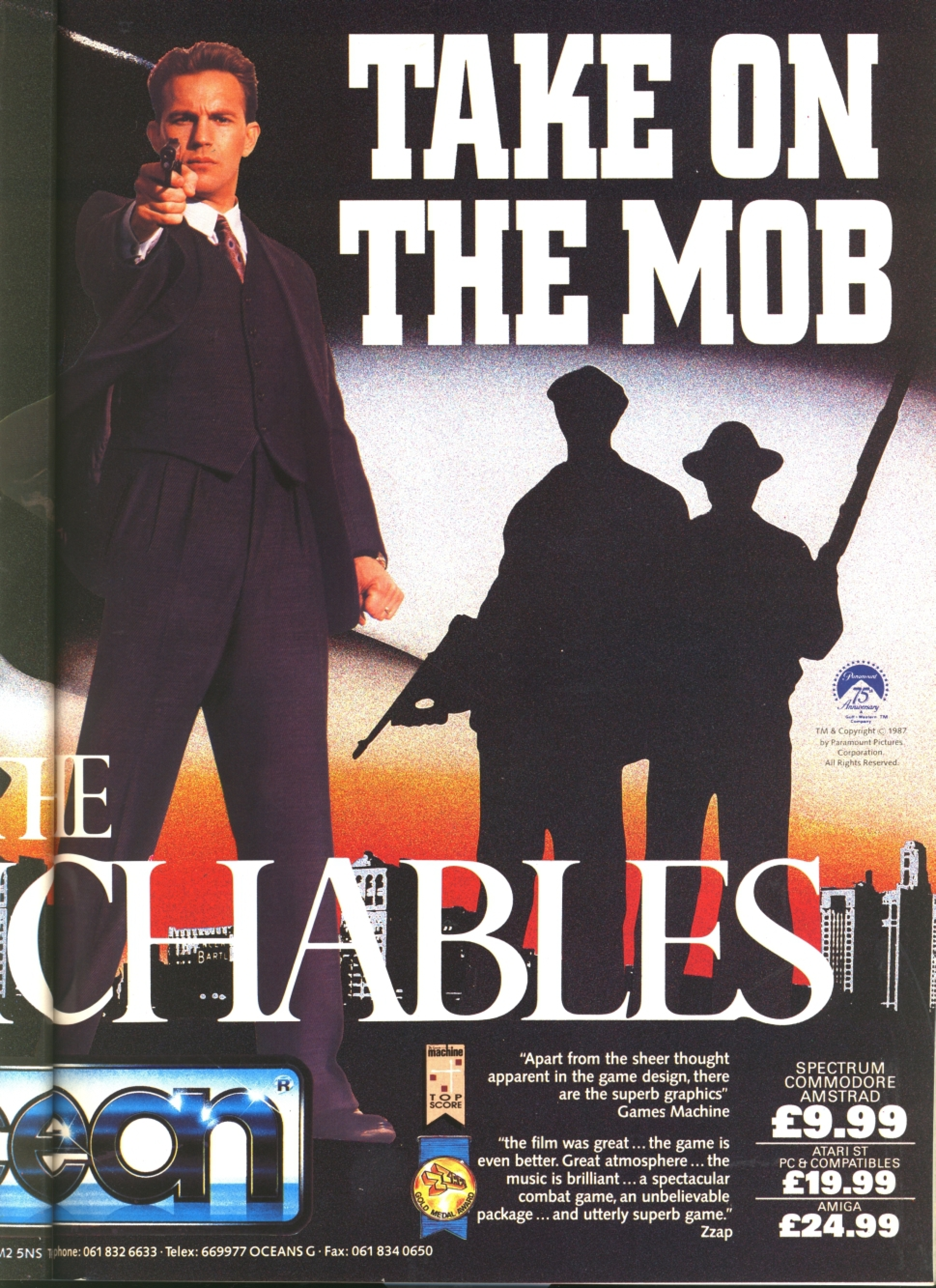


3) Brilliant! Connect the houses to the industry by road, and up springs a grimy old factory to provide 'entertainment' for the masses. What a caring, thoughtful city developer I am. Time passes...



4) Amazing! Just three decades (about half an hour, in fact) after beginning my city, and it's well on the way to becoming a 'thriving' metropolis. Hmm... I think I'll call it 'Birmingham'.


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UNDER WRAPS

MIDWINTER

MidWinter sounds frighteningly like a song Aled Jones might 'sing', but is actually a computer game cross between *Lords of Midnight*, *Carrier Command* and the Arctic circle. At the mention of Mike Singleton and Maelstrom, *David McCandless* ran up to Liverpool (near Wales) to ask: "Wochs gowin ong?" (in his most authentic 'Brookie' accent).





This is the view through your trendy ski-goggles, encompassing a barren, featureless wasteland of snow, ice and cross-hatch patterns.





1 This is a picture of the character you are piloting. In this case, it's the brawny bronzed 'hero' of the game, Captain Stark.

2 The little figure here shows how active you are being. It will wave its arms and legs around in a ludicrous fashion and the more ludicrous the fashion, the more active you are.

3 This dynamic little icon shows the amount of energy you are expanding. It slowly fills up with red as fatigue sets in.

4 The watch allows you to keep track of the game time in annoying 24 hour clock times. So you're not allowed to say seven o'clock in the morning, it's now oh-seven-hundred-hours. (Roger, wilco and out.)

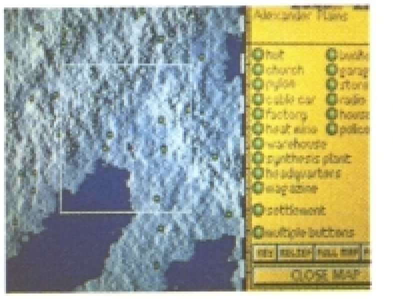
5 This shows your current angle and gradient. As you can see, Captain Stark is wooshing down a steep 45 degree slope (flash git).

6 The all-seeing and all-knowing compass, showing you which direction you're heading in. It only tells you N, S, E or W so it's worthwhile remembering the 'never eat shredded wheat' adage. (*What on earth are you wittering about? Ed.*)

7 This is your position in a 'quadrant' of the original map. The colours represent rough heights and depths below sea level.

8 Here's a well-camoflagued building. Mmmm... yellow, green and brown – yes, just the right sort of colours to 'blend in' with the surrounding whiteness.

9 This is the view over Parkinson's Valley (named after the ups and downs and ins and outs of the terrain). Captain Stark is preparing to do a swift slide-and-strike manoeuvre on the town below.



Naturally I chose the worst day to travel to Liverpool. All my preconceptions of 'oop' Northern cities, Tetley tea bags and David Yip on *Brookside* were fulfilled when I arrived. Dusty. Drab. Dreary. Dirty.

Still, Liverpool is definitely a city with multiple heritages, a city of stanchions: The Beatles – stanchion of pop music; Anfield Road – stanchion of football; *The LiverBirds* – stanchion of comedy (where would British comedy be today without that scene where Margo delivers some greasy newly-born piglets eh?). But could it be Liverpool – stanchion of software? *Midwinter* might just put Merseyside and Maelstrom on the map. An eight-strong programming team have been slaving since March to bring the game into existence, overseen by the watchful strategic eye of Mike Singleton, who in turn is overseen by the ever-so-watchful administrative orb of Hugh Batterbury. Mike has designed and programmed the majority of the ST game, with Peter Barnett doubling as production manager and 3D graphics modeller. Andy Elkerton and Chris Pink are responsible for the static graphics, title screens and in-game displays. Val Franko and Dave Ollman are a working partnership on *Midwinter* PC, and Dave Gautrey is the Amiga man. Facetious George Williamson is the guy behind the enemy movement, game logic, and dirty jokes (they all wanted a mention).

THE PLOT

It is the future. The world has suffered from a global climatic crisis not even David Icke could save us from. A freak meteor shower has rained down on mother-earth, exploding and throwing large amounts of dust into the atmosphere. This, coupled with seismic disruption and widespread volcanic activity, has triggered off a second ice-age. The sea level has dropped dramatically, creating an extra land-mass in the middle of the Atlantic, in the region of the Azores. Partly because of the chilly weather at the time, and partly because the new island lies in the middle of the ocean, this nouvelle lump of rock has been named *Midwinter*. Various colonists from all over the globe have descended on this non-political rock and formed er, colonies.

The new inhabitants come from different social backgrounds: new-age hippies wanting to reincarnate Supertramp; skiing yuppies on a bijou holidayette; right-on post-graduates aiming to 'emmesh' themselves in the community – all sorts of people. They survive the chilliness by extracting underground warmth with heat mines, and manufacturing food and supplies in factories. But unfortunately, the island has also attracted a power-mad mogul, General Masters, who makes Hitler look like a little man with a moustache who sometimes got a bit 'cross'. Masters has colonised an entire peninsula of the isle and seeks to rule the rest by attacking and gaining control of everyone elses' heat mines. Masters has a moustache.



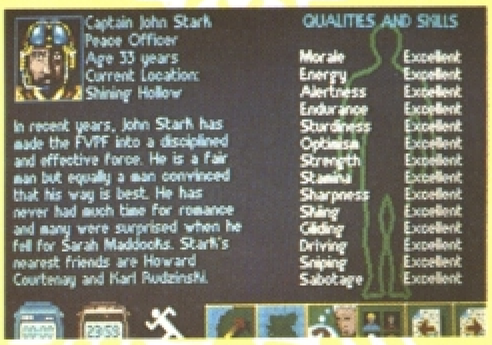
THE GAME

You take control of Captain Stark, the gnarled and street-wise leader of the 'Free Villagers' Peace Force' who look after the island, and protect it from big fish and rather unruly pebbles etc. Through him you must recruit other members to the force from the collection of 32 characters available, and then unite them to combat the malevolent Masters. Unfortunately, they are distributed in fixed positions around the island, and the island is quite big (about 400 miles square). So, General Masters' forces pour in from his penisula, aiming to overcome the villages, while his three radio stations send out jamming signals to prevent a collective defence. It's all clever stuff. To your advantage, Masters' army use snow-buggies to move about the island and so are restricted to travelling along the valleys, whereas your team can use skis, hang-gliders and their own snow-buggies, meaning they can cut swift short-cuts across terrain.

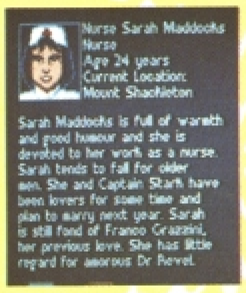
The best strategy is to recruit as many characters to your side as possible, and then conceive a cunning plan to save the whole island. The game is played in game-time and not real time. This means you won't have to sit for three days in front of your computer waiting for the General to mobilise his troops, during which you move all your players around the island. The problem is that you have to move them physically and this is when the 3D vector graphics come in.

THE RECRUITS

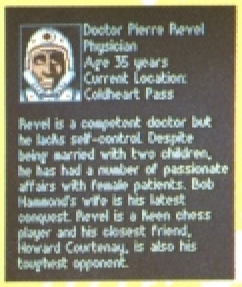
Altogether there are 32 characters in *Midwinter* – and the tangled web of their past lives and 'loves' gives the game a soap-opera element which makes recruitment an extremely tricky business. For instance, meet...



THE BOSS: No, no, not Bruce 'Stringbean' – these are the statistics and attributes of one Captain John Stark, the esteemed leader (i.e. you). From this description you can make a biased assumption that he is a middle-aged, pig-headed git, who, by his own admission, is not interested in romance. Well, maybe it is Bruce Springsteen after all then.

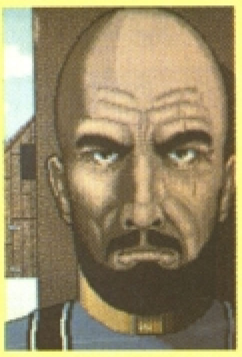


THE 'LOVE INTEREST': She's the nurse actually, but she 'gets around' a bit. Her name is Sarah Maddocks and she's pretty talented – even clocking up 'excellent' ratings for sniping and sabotage. Should come in handy if she ever decides to work for the NHS...



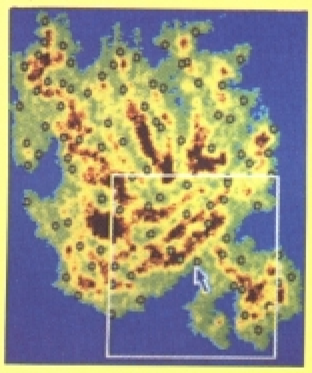
THE DIRTY DOC: Suave (but ever so slightly greasy) Pierre Revell, doctor of medicine, isn't too hot on medical ethics, but he's pretty 'steamy' in the rumpo department. Nurse Sarah isn't too keen though (she prefers Captain Stark), so keep them apart.

THE BADDIE: This is General Masters, a thoroughly evil Hitler-type person who probably chews up live hamsters for brekkie. Spookily enough, he bears an uncanny resemblance to Maelstrom administrative supremo Hugh Batterbury; any mention of this similarity in the Maelstrom office will result in gales of uproarious 'in-joke' laughter.

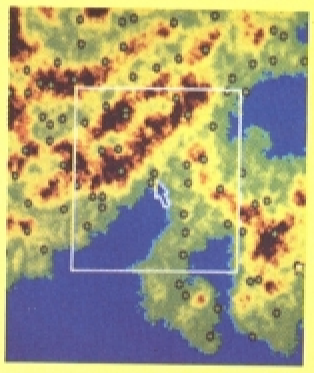

HUGH


THE GENERAL

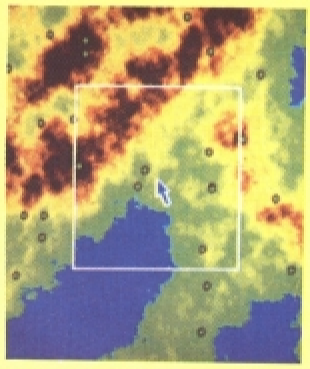
THE ISLAND



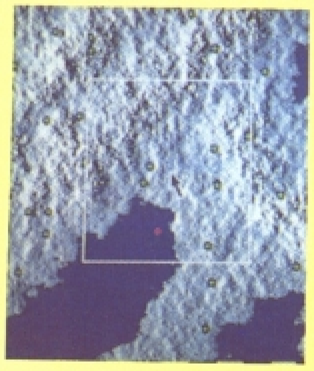
This is the map at full zoom-out. Unusually the shape of the island bears no resemblance to any member of the Maelstrom team, and is not greeted by uproarious applause when commented on.



Here is the map again, now showing the previously boxed area magnified on screen. More settlements and geographical details come into view.



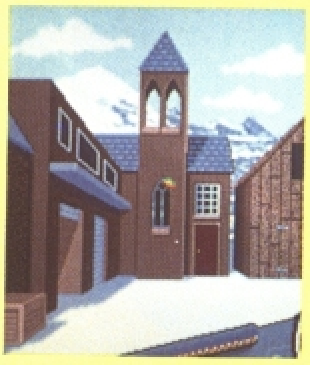
Zooming in yet again reveals yet more details and contour lay-outs. Green is the lowest height while black describes the peaks.



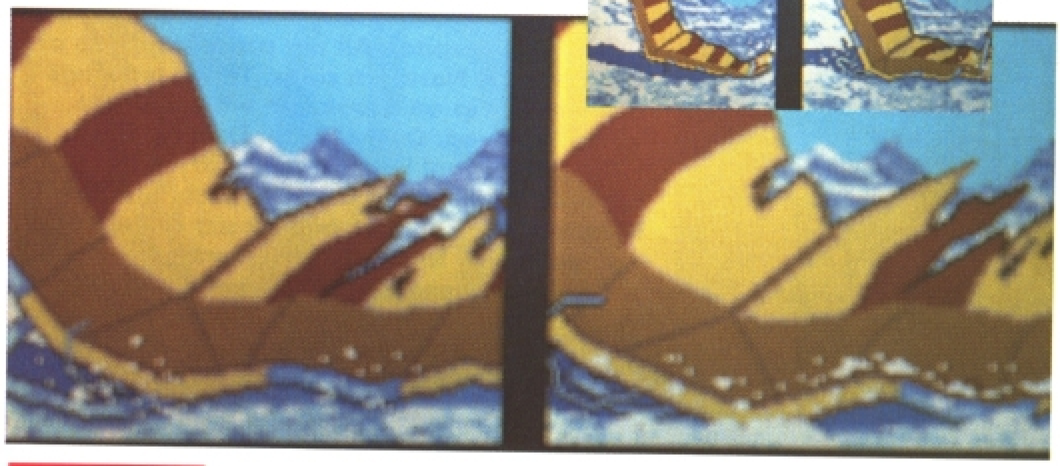
And then we switch into relief mode. Now the same area is shown with every little delve and rise displayed in glorious monochrome.

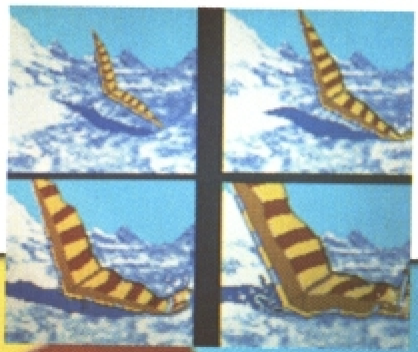


This is the limit of the magnification (unless you're prepared to shell out for an electron microscope). Good-looking fractal land-scapes, eh?



Aha! Here's a 'scenic' Swiss-style corner of the isle – let's hope it's full of tiny children and kindly, peace-loving, defenceless old watchmakers. They'll be easy *peasy* to blow to smithereens!

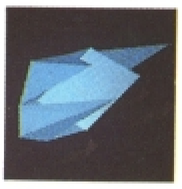




Freak weather conditions, a well-aimed rifle shot or just general rubbishness will result in your character doing a 'Mike Smith' and crash landing in the tundra.

THE VECTORS

On moving, you are shunted instantly to an outside scene, as seen by you through ski goggles, or handglider goggles, or snow-buggy windscreen (depending on the method of transport). Rearing up on all sides of you are hills and valleys. You can see quite a way into the distance where huge mountains loom out from the misty horizon. You can race around the undulating landscape (up to 60 mph on skis), twist in and out of trees and ski-jump off cliffs. But let's face it, the Artic is not the most colourful of places. For that reason all



the buildings and vehicles are dressed up in a motley of browns, reds and greens which stick out from the snow like a 70 foot sign saying "PLEASE BOMB HERE".

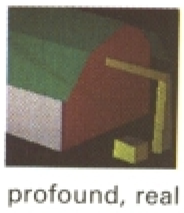
While you're frolicking in the snow, you may encounter some of the General's advancing hordes. This is a cue for a combat sequence and a bit of close range scrapping. The enemy will take pot shots at you, and you return their fire with rifle shots, missiles, stick grenades (ski up behind them and lob the grenade into their roof rack) and snow-torpedos (rockets on skis which seek-and-destroy across the terrain).

To win the game you must repel the general's hordes and then infiltrate his base and destroy his heat mine and adjoining 'all-weather' jacuzzi. No mean feat by any standards, but possible if you learn how to recruit the characters.

THE CHARACTERS

Icons control the action and momentum of the game, and it is by using icons that you manipulate the characters. There are 32 characters each with their own skills, personality, likes, dislikes and history. For this reason you have to be very tactful in whom you assign to recruit whom, and selective in who you choose to be on your team to avoid personality-clashes.

Each character has a rating for certain physical and personal traits. Gone are your shallow Charisma, Strength, and



Wisdom (as you might find in early, not as socially conscious games), we're in the 90s now, and *Midwinter's* characters have profound, real attributes. The emotional ones run along the lines of optimism, sturdiness, charm and bravery, while the others like endurance, climbing, sniping and skiing define the physical makeup of the character.

Every person has a skill or ability which will come in useful. The mechanic for instance, can repair damaged snow-buggies, while the hairdresser can give the more fashion-conscious characters a little 'trim' before they hit the slopes. The nurse is very useful when a character is injured.

An injury (caused by a fall or by being shot) will hamper a character's capabilities. If he has two broken legs he will not be able to ski, but can still fire a gun. The same thing applies if you have a broken head – you'll be able to ski, but you have a little trouble living. Wounds and damaged limbs are best bandaged up by the nurse. If she is unavailable, (in bed with Captain Stark for example) then another character can administer first aid. But no other characters have the Nurse's gentle touch (as Captain Stark will testify) and so their bandaging will not be as skilful.

THE MAP

The key to the strategy of the game and indeed the whole game is the map. Using the map you can keep tabs on the enemy, isolate and examine villages, zoom in and locate characters, zoom out and calculate your position relative to theirs, find heat mines, or factories or cable cars – and generally do all those strategic type things. It all works like an electronic town map you might find at a Bavarian holiday resort.



Buttons down the side are tagged with types of buildings (factories, churches, chemical plants and so on) and once pressed, the selected buildings light

THE PROGRAMMER

Mike is so laid back he's almost lying on the carpet. But his nonchalance disguises a formidable programming mind and equally formidable softology.

"I started doing Applied Physics at University," he whispers casually. His time at 'Uni' coincided with the radical flared 'n' flowery peace-man-peace era, which obviously affected Mike who realised that "Physics was dead boring, and English was more interesting and easier." So Mike became an English teacher until he found that his tinkering with ZX-81's in the garden shed could be more lucrative.

His first and – still to this day – most well paid computer job was programming a games pack for the miracle micro of its day, the ZX-81. Mike was approached by Sir Clive himself, and made a cool £6000 from the deal. From then on Mike switched from computer to computer, writing games left, right and centre. Under one label, he fashioned a few quite well-received Commodore 64 games, namely *Seige, Shadowfax* and *Snake-Pit*. The latter was a weird Freudian nightmare featuring a screen full of writhing, cannabalistic snakes.

Then came the big one – *Lords of Midnight*. A huge and revolutionary adventure/strategy game which boasted 28,000 locations, loads of characters and an addictiveness that would last for months. It was big and together with the follow up, *Doomdark's Revenge*, shot Mike into the big league programming world. A game based on *Star Trek* followed. Then reverting back to his fantasy roots, Mike's next release (under the Maelstrom banner) was *Dark Sceptre*, a spooky arcade adventure which was a huge success. He has also always nutured an interest in the works of J.R.R. Tolkien.

"*Lords of Midnight* was my little *Lord of the Rings*," he confesses. All his hobbity ideas were let loose when he convinced Melbourne House that they needed a strategic *LOTR*.

And now *MidWinter*, a slight change in tact and time period for Mike, with more arcade sequences and a more contemporary setting than his other games. Will he be going back to fantasy? "We've no firm plans as yet. Our next release will be *StarLord*, a computer version of the futuristic PBM game I ran in 1980. Then perhaps a 16-bit version of *Lords of Midnight*."

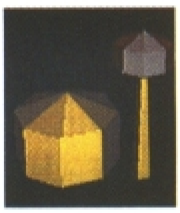
After *Midnight* the next 'Mike Singleton game' was almost as eagerly awaited as the next issue of ZERO (plug). Was it difficult to live up to the expectations?

"No, not really," he replies insouciantly. "I'm always trying new ideas." All his games seem to be fundamentally strategic and cerebral, has he even wanted to do an arcade game? "We have done. *Whirligig* from Firebird. That was a shoot 'em up."

Does this mean that Mike Singleton, strategy genius and action game hater, plays arcade games? "No." Amen.



The Maelstrom team (from left to right): George Williamson, Mike Singleton (sitting), Dave Gautrey, Dave Ollman, Pete Barnett, Andy Elkerton, Hugh 'General Masters' Batterbury, Val Franco and some ever-so-slightly 'spicy' wall-decoration.



up on the map. As you zoom down, extra dots appear, representing less important locations. You can see the island (or a magnified portion) in two different modes: geography book or contour mode which shows all the political and rudimentary geographical features in colour; or you can view it in photographic relief mode, which strips away the colour and replaces it with a what could be a monochrome satellite photo, detailing the contours and features of the terrain.

The map is generatered with real time fractals. Fractals are equations that form landscapes when represented graphically.

"We have 50 control points which define the height of the land at particular points," Peter explains. "The rest of the land is filled in by fractal generation. We managed to get it looking rendering without spending processing time. It is as fast as a relief map as it is as a contour map. There's lots of detail you don't see until you switch it to relief – and it's all there, all the dips and lumps."



The whole map is built around this crude basic framework and then filled in and detailed by real-time fractal mathmatics (and if you can explain what *those* are, please try to avoid doing it at parties).

The map is quite a complex little beast. In the game there's a triangular face for every two pixels shown on the map. In total that's 10 million triangles in the graphics enviroment. And most places have a name. It took the team over two days to think up them up. Whisky Cove is one, a reference to Mike's favourite pastime (the pub); and Mad Joe's Pass is another, where the 'pass' is actually a treacherous canyon.

That's in addition to the three years spent developing the game. Has it been worth the wait? We'll reveal all (hem) in next month's ish.

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	MidWinter
PUBLISHER	Microprose
PRICE	To be announced
FORMAT	ST/Amiga
RELEASED	Jan 1990

STOP

SWITCHBLADE

Gremlin turning Japanese shock stunna! There's more than a slight hint of the east in *Switchblade* by Simon Phillips, author of *Rick Dangerous*. Has Gremlin learned anything about releasing 'fab and groovy' games in its long five month absence from the software market? *Sean Kelly* and *Duncan McDonald* find out.

Sometimes we don't know why people bother with scenarios. We mean, they're all the same really. Either about a darkness obscuring the land 'cos the light's been nicked by a warped fairy. Or the wizard's magical stethoscope has been smashed into several pieces by an evil daycare nurse and you must travel throughout the huge caverns, collecting all the bits whilst fighting off manifold meanies. Always one or the other.

Switchblade falls into the latter category and this time the hero, Hiro has to hunt through the Undercity to find the 16 chunks of the Fireblade which have been destroyed by Havok. No mean feat really, as the Undercity consists of huge caverns with loads of hidden passages and seemingly inaccessible pathways. There are even hidden sections behind brick walls which are easy to miss, but often lead to massive areas of the Undercity. This is rather like the *Mario* games, a genre which is making a bit of a comeback at the moment. Basically, the rotten bricks look slightly different from most of the bricks, and are destroyed by giving them a quick punch or kick. As well as leading to other sections, they often reveal any one of a number of different bonuses to help our Hiro along the way.

LICE TO SEE YOU...

Not suprisingly, as well as numerous labyrinthine passages, Hiro has to face a whole caboodle of enemies. Over 10 different types in all, from mutated lice to robots, not forgetting the nice different 'natural' hazards such as proximity activated floor spikes. Luckily though, Hiro isn't unarmed and also has three effective bashing methods: a nifty punch, a mean mid kick and a low sweeping kick. To use any one of these, you must hold down the fire button for a varying length of time. Each type of meanie requires a different number of hits to destroy or repel it.

For those of you who think armed combat is strictly for shandy-drinkers, there are also many evil weapons hidden behind bricks, such as shuriken and fireballs. Unfortunately, these aren't infinite so you've got to make sure that you really put them to good use.

As well as useful bonuses, Hiro will also stumble upon others of no practical use, but which provide a boost to the sort of person who thinks the highest score in a game is a reflection of their manliness. Amongst the more common of these are urns and diamonds which give a score bonus. Collecting the letters of the words 'EXTRA' and 'BONUS' will grant an extra life and a 10,000 point bonus respectively.

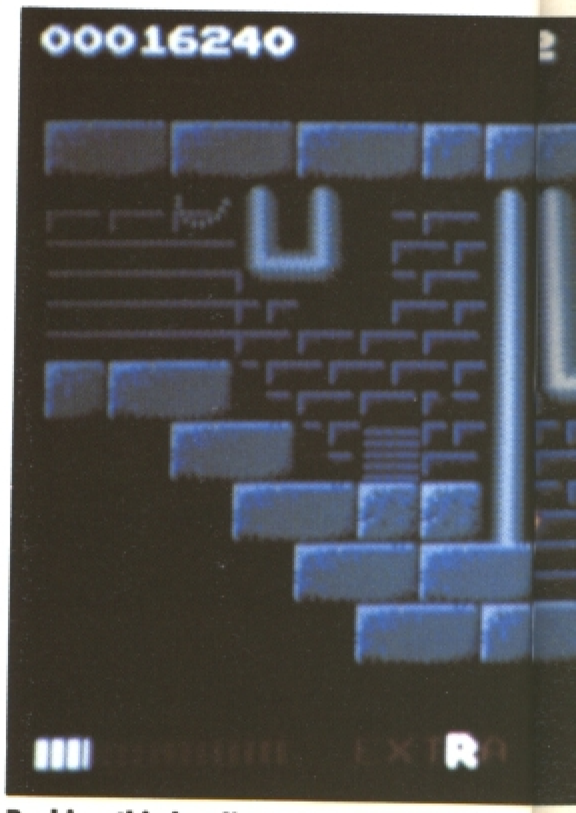
And that, as they say, is that. A huge 128 screen arcade adventure, with loads of enemies, bonuses and... er... other things. But the question is, has Gremlin's game benefitted from its five month absence from the computer scene?



The first mega-nasty explodes only after Hiro has given him a good ol' kicking. (ST Screen).

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Switchblade
PUBLISHER	Gremlin
PRICE	£19.99
FORMAT	ST/Amiga
RELEASED	Out now



Bashing this hot lice thing is no mean feat but necessary if you're going to use the next section. (Amiga Screen).

AMIGA

ZERO HERO

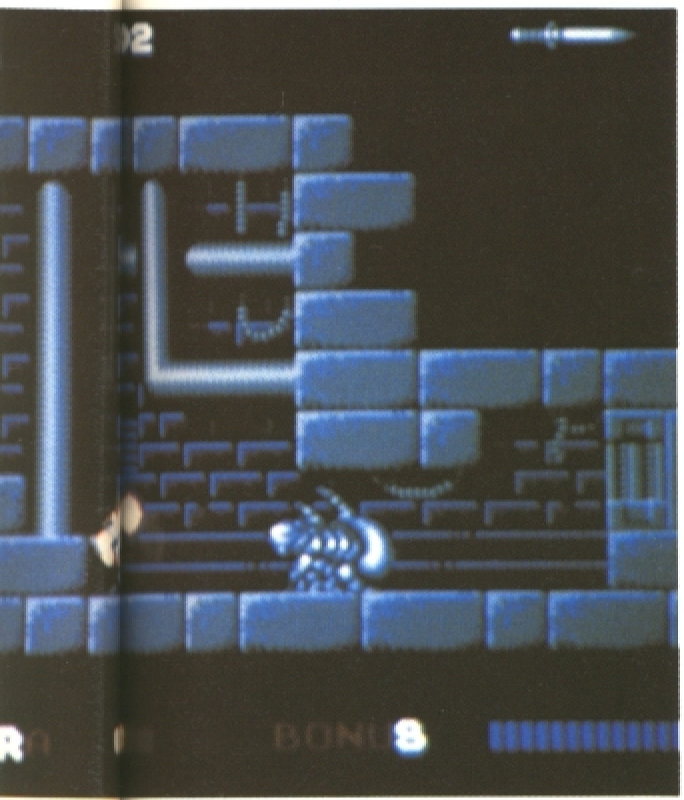
Sean: I first saw an unfinished version of *Switchblade* a couple of months ago and suspected then that it would be a brilliant game. I was right. It's a real corker.

Apparently, *Switchblade* has been Simon Phillips' pet project for a couple of years now, and the fact that he has had the opportunity to work at getting it as perfect as possible without the pressure of any deadlines, really does show. It's a very sophisticated game: there's no faffing around with multiloads, and none of the 'show off' type things that a lot of 16-bit programmers tend to throw in to prove how 'fab' they are. Just highly polished playability from the word go.

The graphics are nice and dingy, just like real caverns would be I suppose but not so dark as to make the game dull to look at. The sprites, although fairly tiny, are all beautifully animated and extremely detailed. There's a nice orientally sounding tune and some excellent clangy metallic in-game effects throughout.



Our spritely Hiro's triple jump attempt.





HASSLE FACTOR: 0
No problems at all – it's highly polished and loads in one go.

However, what makes *Switchblade* really stand out is the sheer breadth of playability. Even after visiting a location 10 times, I still found the sort of little hidden bonuses and passages scattered all over the place, which are reminiscent of *Super Mario Brothers*. It's these elements which leave you wondering if you really have found all the secrets of a particular section that make *Switchblade* so addictive. There is also a massive variety of enemies, weapons and pick-up bonuses to choose from.

In addition, each game lets you get a little further into the caverns, drawing you back into the game just as you were on the verge of giving up.

My only gripe is the lack of a SAVE facility – even a RAMSAVE would have been welcome, as going back to the start at the end of each game is a little tiresome to say the least. Picogripes aside, *Switchblade* is one of the best arcade adventures around – mapping freaks will be in heaven – and one which I could recommend without hesitation to any fans of the genre.

THE VERDICT

- **G** GRAPHICS 91
- **S** SOUND 86
- **A** ADDICTIVENESS 93
- **E** EXECUTION 90

Perfect example of what an excellent arcade adventure should be like. A fine return to form for Gremlin with an extremely classy game.

90

Dunc: Here's a little bit of 'games scenario blurb' for you. Terribly sorry and all that but there are only three small sentences to contend with. Here goes...

"For 10,000 years he slept. His mind feeding on the nightmares of the weak. Now he has awakened."

Wasn't too painful, was it? I suppose you'll be wanting to know who 'he' is. Well you'll be 'wanting' for rather a long time because I'm not going to tell you. *(He's called Havok and he's the person you have to find and kill actually. Ed.)*

Switchblade is an absolutely ginormous flip-screen explore 'em up. It's also a bit of a punch 'n' shoot 'em up as well, containing elements from *Super Mario Brothers, Ranarama, Rick Dangerous* and, to a certain extent, *Spherical*. And it's blinkin' good. I'll talk you through a little chunk from the beginning of the game.

"There's my little sprite, Hiro. He's even smaller than David Rappaport. Let's walk him to the left. Hmm. The animation's quite nice for one so tiny. (Sound of screen 'flipping'). Blimey, a little flickering bonfire thing. I''ll head back the way I came. (Several screen-flips and alien encounters later). Ho ho. I dealt with those nasties rather skilfully. A deft kick to certain parts of their 'anatomy' did the trick nicely. Yaaaarrggh – I've fallen down a hole. Oh no, some bigger nasties. Kick punch kick punch kick, hee hee hee. But there's no way back up or down either. Looks as if I'm going to have to just sit in this tiny hole...



One mean mutha...

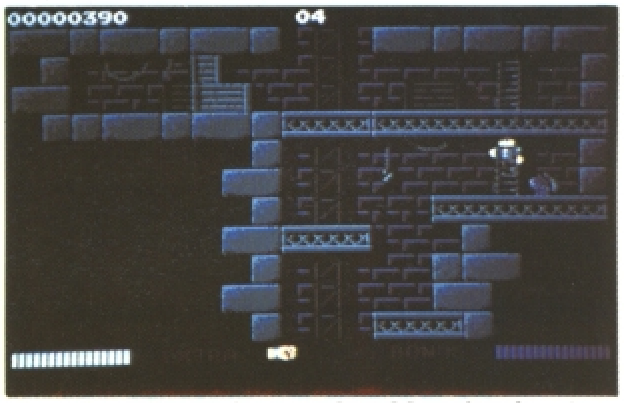
... (A few weeks later), ho hum. Bored, bored, bored, bored, *bored*. I know, I'll commit suicide – but before I do, I'll just go and kick that bottom wall block. Well I'll be... it's disappeared. So has the one above it – and there's an icon for me to collect. Blimey, I've got a weapon to use. Hey, another part of the screen has lit up: it's another room and there's a ladder going down. Corks! It's a reallv big room full of platforms and aliens. I'm off."

And that, in a nutshell, is *Switchblade* (or an extremely miniscule part of it, anyway). It's choc-a-bloc full of surprises and 'how on earth do I get further than this' type dilemmas. The learning curve is brilliant – frustration really does raise its ugly head occasionally but you'll always crack the problem (i.e. discover a new disappearing block to hit which will open up a whole new series of passages) long before giving up.

And *Switchblade's* not lacking on the shoot 'em up front, either. There's everything you could possibly want, from the *'R-typish'* power bar (where holding the fire button for varying lengths of time gives you a different amount of punch, kick or weapon intensity) to the icons that increase those things that need, erm, increasing.

HASSLE FACTOR: 0
(There isn't one).

Switchblade is a thoroughly absorbing and enjoyable addition to the genre of 'think and kill' games. In fact, it's one of the best. The graphics are great, the sound is great, the action is great. In fact



Hiro plays Porcupines And Ladders (Amiga Screen).



Hiro has to bash that nasty underneath him if he's to get to the bottom left exit (ST Screen).

everything is great. And it's big, with well over 100 screens (plus the way that each screen is made up of smaller 'screens' which only light up once they've been entered – á la *Ranarama* – makes it seem even bigger). All in all, *Switchblade* is an extremely polished bit of software, so here's some advice: buy it.

THE VERDICT

- **G** GRAPHICS 86
- **S** SOUND 86
- **A** ADDICTIVENESS 87
- **E** EXECUTION 91

A thoroughly addictive 'thinking man's sedate shoot 'em up', in which the balance between thinking and shooting is pitched perfectly.

88


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INSIDE

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Why Santa won't deliver the Konix this Xmas

How to run US software on your Nintendo

Thrashing the Sega Mega Drive version of Altered Beast

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PALM-TOP POWER



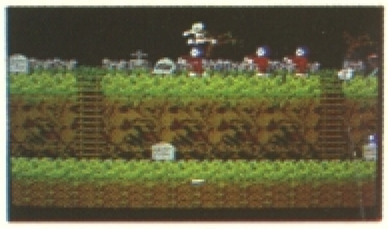
A peak at Nintendo's Game Boy and some of the software that's now available

REVIEWED



SPELLCASTER

Battle with oriental magic in this sensational Sega adventure



GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS

Fight off nasty ghouls and gremlins in Nintendo's bruising beat 'em up


TWINWORLD
* Great fun, colourful and addictive too : Overall rating : 81 %
A. Smith
Amiga Format (January issue)
* It's one of the best 16 bit exploration games around. A great combination of platforms and arcade adventure action. Overall rating : 81 %
Computer & Video Games
(January issue)
* Twinworld is a lot of fun ! Overall rating : 78 %
Phil King ZZAP (January issue)
A game created
by Blue Byte
Available on ST and Amiga
UBI SOFT
Entertainment Software
Screenshots from Amiga Version

QUICKIES

SANTA PULLS THE PLUG

The launch of the Konix Multi-System has once again been delayed. But the good news is that the console's future has been finally secured with a rather hefty cash injection from distributor Addons.

Previously promised in time for Xmas shopping, the console is not now expected until early next year. Konix was very nearly toppled by taking on too much itself and when Epyx, distributors of Konix joysticks, crashed owing Konix a lot of dosh, things looked very uncertain indeed.

Due to this recent rough ride Konix has been looking for a buyer. Addons showed interest and ended up buying a stake in the company. Just how much control Addons has over Konix is as yet unclear, but that's unimportant when the console's future is at stake.

So just when will the Multi-System actually hit the streets? Konix is still hoping to get a few machines out by Christmas but nobody's taking them very seriously. With money in the bank, Konix can now go ahead with manufacturing so Easter next year now looks like a possibility. But don't hold your breath...

GIVING MENTION A MENTION

Want a PC Engine? Mention have got just the thing. It's called the PC Engine Plus and is claimed to be 100 per cent compatible with the UK TV system. For £199 you get the complete package and a guarantee that it will work on all UK TV systems. Many other dealers offer Japanese Engines which have been fudged to work with the British TVs. However, the image quality is generally very poor. Mention is on (0436) 78827.

CUTESY CONSOLES

London Software Designs is currently devising a corker of a new game, *Chronicles Of Cute*, for the Atari 7800 console.

Programmed by Colin Hughes and graphicked by our very own master artist Alan Tomkins, *Cute* is due for release fairly soon.

The game is being programmed via the ST. The ST is used for programming, then code for the 7800 console is squirted across to the 7800 via a wire and a certain amount of prayer. A developers' pack for the 7800 costs £2000 – for that you get an ST, a hard drive, lots of wire, a 7800 console and an oversized RAM cartridge that holds the game being developed.

There will be four levels in the final version of *Cute*. You'll control a lad or lass and fight and jump your way through hordes of mutated insect life to rescue your sister or brother. Well scary stuff! And the game will cost around £15. Look out for it 'cos I'm sure it's gonna be a winner.



This voluptuous woman (you'll find her in the console version) is modelled on Alan Tomkins. No joke! He sat himself down, peered in the mirror, pouted, winked and drew what he saw. We reckon he thinks he's an Elvira look-a-like.



Alan loves the ST OCP Art Studio graphics package and designs all the graphic masterpieces in it. On the left you can see the ST enemy graphics in *Cute* while on the right you can see the baddies for the 7800 console.

IN THE BEGINNING...

If you're head over heels in love with power, just turn to the Sega Megadrive machine for comfort. This cutting-edge console (called the Genesis in the States) isn't due to be officially sold in the UK until next year, but 'moles' from the USA report it's already outselling the American version of the PC Engine so there should be phenomenal software support when it eventually appears over here.

Virgin Mastertronic is already touting a list of 15 games due for release. These include *Super Thunderblade* and *Ghouls 'N' Ghosts*. It looks as if arcade giants Capcom and software houses Activision and Spectrum Holobyte will also be lending their support to the console.



MEGADRIVE EXPANSION

Everyone's always after more and Japanese console giant Sega is about to offer it. In Japan, Megadrive owners are about to be offered a 3.5" disk drive and keyboard which will plug into the console. This will transform the console into a 'mega home computer' – that's how the Japanese are billing it. Which in turn will mean that serious graphics and sound packages could be written to unleash the Megadrive's potential. Sega is believed to be working on a light tablet which will plug into the Megadrive. Software is also being written to take advantage of the console's huge colour palette and high resolution.

NINTENDO GO FOR THE THROAT

In the run up to Christmas, Nintendo will be making its biggest stab yet at the UK market with the launch of a massive television ad campaign to promote its entire range of products. In two adverts, screened nationwide, you'll get to see the full range of Nintendo's hardware, including the zapper light gun and robot.

Nintendo has built up a huge market in the States, selling everything from breakfast cereal to Nintendo underpants (hem) and is, understandably, interested in doing the same thing in the UK. As a result, Serif is to take over distribution in this country. Nintendo offshoot, NESI, previously tried this subtle markrting ploy but failed to make any impact.

SPELLCASTER

CONSOLE CLASSIC

Virgin Mastertronic/£29.95/Sega

Categorise this one and you'll be in for some problems. Is it an adventure or an action game? Well, at the end of the day who cares? It's how it plays that matters. And this one really does play.

Plug it in and switch on, and things blast out at you like a bolt from the stars.



Wow, was that a fireball? Talk about speed.

The graphics are brilliant. They're very colourful and feature some great animated action.

The game is set in Japan with hosts of peaceful little temples dotted all over the place. The temples are under attack from men and mutants. In an attempt to defend them, a band of warriors were sent to one of the towers called Enriku; sadly they were all nobbled.

This is where Daikak pops up. He's head of the Summit Temple – the most important of the lot. This guy summons up his brother Kane, who's one mean dude. We could go into long detail about how he went about obtaining special powers, but it's infinitely yawny so we'll just say he's acquired the ability to shoot fireballs, dispatch a few bolts of lightning and fly. In short, he's a Spellcaster.

Kane is now needed to guard the people who taught him these skills 'cos there are evil men pouring out from all over the shop, and they're intent on slaughtering everything that moves. He must first go to the fallen Enriku Temple and defeat enemy after enemy before he can reach the temple. If Kane gets through, he meets a soldier in the middle of his dying breath who mutters "Izumo", before gasping for the last time. You then wander back to the Summit temple and march forward



This is how all the action scenes are made up – with space for messages and spells.

through other adventures all about avenging the death of your fellow warriors at Enriku.

The adventuring is in the form of finding clues and using them to seek retribution, but to get the clues you must fight some mini battles. These are very impressive and require you to be on the ball with every move you make. You go through sections where you need to fend off fire-breathing dragons, jump from one platform to another and enter into combat with armed soldiers. All the variety makes for a very playable and enjoyable game.

There are a lot more benefits to being a Spellcaster than you might imagine. The ability to cast spells means that you need to give a lot of thought as to which spell will defeat the marauding beasts in front of you. There are eight spells you can use and these let you hand out smart-bomb attacks and can even give you limited invincibility.

Strength and Energy is what the game's all about. You start with 20 units of each. Energy goes when you cast spells and strength disappears when you touch an enemy. If these get to zero, you've had it.

A ninth spell is given to you at the start and this is essentially a save position feature. You're given a 24-digit



You've got a range of weapons and by using them properly you can thrash the opposition.

code which returns you to the same position next time you play.

Spellcaster is one of the best games available on the Master System at the moment. That's not immediately obvious until you get into some of the action sequences and then, boy does it hit you. There are lots of clever twists and turns in the plot which means there's never a dull moment. These become graphically more exciting the longer you play.

The only thing that prevents the game from being a true adventure is the way you're constantly guided through the game. There's never any chance of you taking a wrong step because the game tells you exactly where you're heading whether you like it or not.

Nevertheless, the action is brilliant and if you're looking for a classic console hit then you need look no further.

THE VERDICT 91

CONSOLI[C]

Your indispensable guide to underhand gameplaying.

ALTERED BEAST

Mega Drive

In addition to a sound test, you can change your altered shape for each round, the start round, difficulty, length of power bar and number of men – if you can't win with that lot, then forget it.

Altered ego – turn off the machine, press the pad down and to the left while holding down all three buttons. Switch on the machine. Move the left and right directions to change the beast and move down to change the level. Press START to continue.

Play select – hold down B and press START. Move the directional control to the left or right to alter the round, press down and then the left or right directions to change difficulty, press down and left or right to alter power bar, press down and left or right to change the number of men. Press START to continue. Hold down A and press START to play with your alterations.

Music test – press the pad up and to the right while holding down A and C. Move the directional keys up or down and press button C to hear a sound. Press START to exit.

DOUBLE DRAGON

Sega

If you want infinite lives on a one player game, then play as far as the fourth level and move towards the doorway. When you're in the centre of the door, perform some back kick leaps and repeat this action until the 'Push START' message appears for a second player. You've now got infinite lives.

DRUNKEN MASTER

PC Engine

Switch on your console with the cartridge installed, now switch it off and back on again. Press and hold the RUN and SELECT buttons, release the RUN button and push up once. Now you can release the SELECT button and push up three times in a row. Now press right six times, down twice and left three times. Choose the stage you want to play and you'll be transported there with invincibility.

CHEATS!

SHINOBI
Sega
When the Shinobi title picture appears, pull back the joystick and press button 2. M1 and S1 now appear on the screen. S is the current stage number and M is the mission you're undertaking. By using the stick to move through possible values you can go to any part of the game you like.

RUSH 'N ATTACK
Nintendo
Occasionally you'll come across an unexpected blind spot amidst an onslaught of enemies. One of these blind spots emerges during the Rocket Men's attack at the end of stage two. By moving to the far left of the screen and standing still, the Rocket men will go away. However, not every stage has a blind spot.

TETRIS
Game Boy
The quickest way to score big points is to score a 'Tetris' – this is the elimination of four lines of blocks simultaneously. The only way to rack up a Tetris is to have plenty of bricks already on the screen and, if the machine is really nice, a long block will appear to neatly fit down a long one-block-wide opening.

RAMPAGE
Sega
If you can't get as far as you want, wait for the Game Over message and then push both buttons down at once. You'll now be able to continue from the last level you were playing.

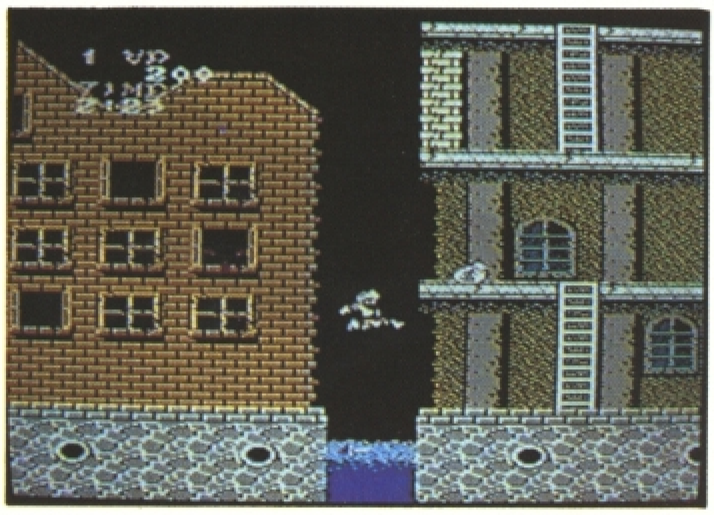
ARKANOID
Nintendo
To skip a round you must press the A button and START at the same time on controller one. It's imperative that you get the timing right otherwise it won't work. This only works for rounds 1 to 17.

GET YOUR TIPS OUT
Send in your gameplaying tips, maps, tactics or cheat codes and you could win some hot software releases for your machine. Send your secrets to **Cheat!, Console Action, ZERO, Dennis Publishing, 14 Rathbone Place, London, W1P 1DE.** Don't forget to state which machine you own, and which the tips are for.

GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS

£24.99/Nintendo

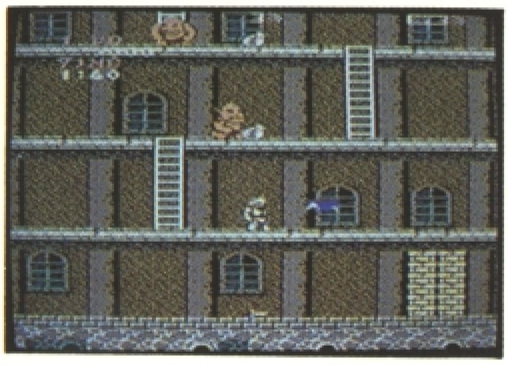
Although *Ghosts 'N' Goblins* has been available for a very long time in the States and indeed, on other formats in the country, it has only just been released on UK Nintendo Format. But why must Britain always be the last to get such goodies? Well, at least it's here and it certainly lives up to all expectations 'cos it's as addictive and challenging as the coin-op.



Ooohh, this looks tricky – you're just about to enter the ghost town and you're praying like mad that nothing's going to leap out of the water.

The beautiful princess has been captured and it's now up to you, oh valiant knight in shining armour, to fight the enemy with five types of weapon and get your 'chick' back. On your travels you pass through seven guarded gates and must fight demons, dragons, giants and zombies. Now's the time to chicken out. Go on Arthur do your stuff!

As you wonder through the various levels enemy characters will burble up from the ground – ugh! They're really gruesome and have no qualms about walking all over you if you let them. Other unsavoury characters appear the further you get in the game – ravens, green monsters, red devils, flying knights, forest ghosts, unicorns, blue demons, petite devils, big bullies, bats, tower monsters, dragons, Satan and the Devil. The closer you get to the seventh gate, the harder the enemy monsters are to kill. The dragon for instance, requires eight hits directly at its head.



The ghost town and the fat apes are after your armour. There's also a raven that doesn't look too pleased.

If you get trampled by a zombie, slimed by a ghost, or lanced by a flying knight, you lose your suit of armour. Poor old Arthur really does look a sight without his clothes on. A second hit, when armourless (harmless – geddit? Oh, forget it!) proves lethal.

Every time you get killed a map appears showing your position in the game – it wouldn't be so bad if you could press fire and get rid of it. But oh no, you've got to sit through the map while it scrolls from the beginning to end. Tedious or what!

Throughout each scene there are jars containing different weapons. Pick one of these up and you might be lucky. Javelins and swords are the best; torches and axes are a tad slow while the cross only temporarily halts the enemies' progress.

Other items can also be picked up. Money bags – well, they're obvious really but what gets you points? Prizes, of course. Ever so occasionally you'll come across a pile of armour – well worth picking up if you're starkers. A helmet adds another life, a filled star will add a few seconds to the time you have to finish your quest while an empty star will do the reverse. The frog king becomes a frog and the magician turns you into a frog when disturbed. Must be true what they say about princesses having a penchant for frogs.



Here's the end of stage two and you're just about to become history. Looks like the unicorn is going to sit on your head – now that'll be pleasant, won't it?

The graphics are detailed and colourful, the scrolling is very smooth and the gameplay wonderfully addictive. A game that's going to keep you playing well into the (k)night time.

THE VERDICT 89

A GAME BOY IN THE HAND IS WORTH TWO...



After bullying custom officials *Dickie Monteiro* managed to smuggle a Nintendo Game Boy into the country. He even got his mits on a couple of games...

At the Summer CES show in the States, Nintendo displayed to stunned show goers, the new Game Boy console: a pocket-sized cartridge-based absolutely mind-blowing (and you're not going to get a go) fabulous box of tricks. Revolutionary might be a better description.

Unlike early hand-held game consoles, Game Boy doesn't use a permanently burned LCD display and you're not restricted to playing just one game. We are talking very clear black and white pixel graphics with variable levels of shading on a dot-matrix screen, Nintendo Entertainment System quality sound, smooth scrolling and all the Nintendo software support you could ever want. For such a small gadget it packs one almighty punch.



Shove one of those cartridges up a Game Boy and see what happens. Oh, er...

The unit itself is pale grey with a two inch square screen which offers a pixel resolution of 160 x 140. A familiar (well, familiar if you've got a Nintendo console) directional controller, A and B fire buttons, and the START and SELECT buttons just beneath the screen.

Power is supplied to the console via four small batteries. You can expect the batteries to give you 20 hours of continuous punishment. A six Volt power supply can be used for playing the machine at home.

Apart from a volume control, contrast control, on/off switch and headphone socket, the only other exciting item on the console is an extension connector. This allows two Game Boys to be hooked together via a Video Link. Two players can then battle it out head to head. Yeoww! Just one drawback – both players require the same game cartridge.

The unit is very compact inside and populated with Japanese custom chips. The driving force behind the Game Boy is an 8-bit Z80 processor – more than enough to drive the screen and all other operations. The processor isn't the normal oblong affair – that simply wouldn't fit into the console's compact design. Instead a redesigned Z80-compatible processor has been used. There's also 64K of RAM to keep tabs on all the program data.

Game cartridges, which easily slot into the back of the console, are actually a little larger than screen size. There are currently only five titles available but Nintendo expects to flood the market early next year. See the box for a run down of what's now available and what'll be coming soon.

Game Boy will be available in this country around Easter of next year. Official Nintendo distributors over here have yet to decide on a price but it is expected to be close to the US price of $89.95. Game cartridges in the States are a standard $24.95. Again, a UK price has yet to be set.

GAME BOY GAMES

Until we master the art of taking Game Boy screen shots, you're going to have to suffer wads of descriptive text. Ah well, 1000 words will do what a picture can't i.e. take up a lot of room and bore you stupid.

TETRIS

What a classic! And converted so well to the Nintendo Game Boy. The game is 'unputdownable', which is worrying for Nintendo as it's given away free with the system. The idea in *Tetris*, as if you didn't know, is to slot blocks of various shapes together as they pile up in a heap at the bottom of the screen. So simple yet so addictive.

SUPER MARIO LAND

Yet another suberbly playable game. If Mario and his pals can't sell the Game Boy then nothing can. Your task is to rescue Princess Daisy from a whole cast of nasty characters that include exploding turtles, spear-throwing bees, stone faces, pogo men and upside-down killer plants. Yikes! And it's so good.

ALLEYWAY

The list of Breakout clones is endless but the game genre still doesn't lose its appeal. *Alleyway* provides you with a whole new range of brick-bashing challenges. Besides bouncing a ball against brick and bat, you must contend with scrolling tiles, falling tiles and bonus screens. Pity special weapons can't be picked up.

BASEBALL

Step up to the plate and dust yourself off for a full nine innings of video baseball. Thanks to the Game Boy you can take the stadium with you! In addition to pitching, batting and fielding, you can also play manager and select the line-up.

Other games in the offing are *Ghostbusters 2* from Activision, *Castlevania, Motorcross Maniacs, Gridiron Gladiators, Saga, Boxxle, Hyper Lode Runner, Kareteka, Nintendo Golf, Lock-N-Chase*. With all these titles and many more on the horizon, Game Boy is fast becoming a fantastic game machine.

ATARI'S HAND JOB

Due for release very shortly in this country is Atari's Lynx, a colour hand-held games console.

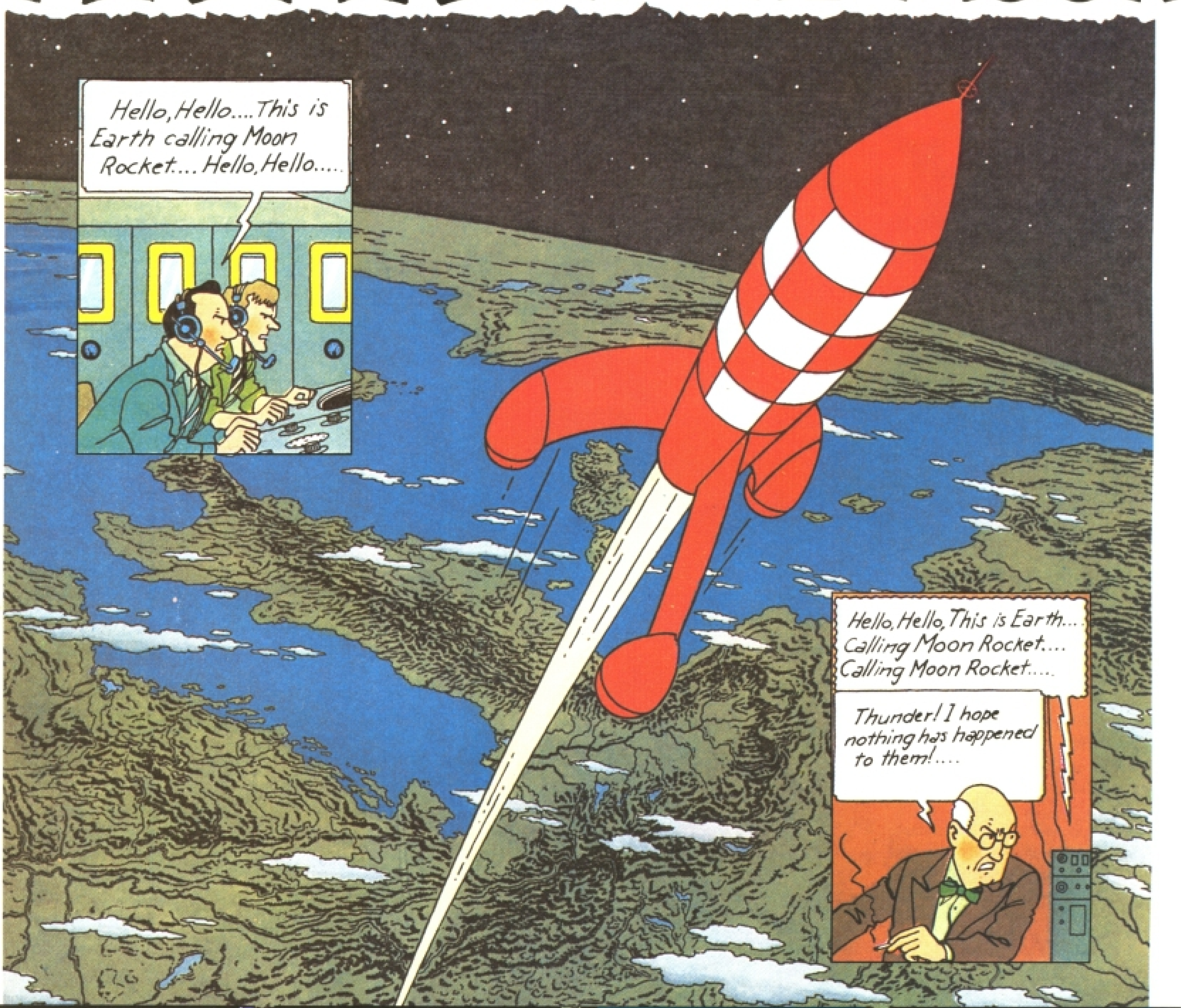
Just to whet your appetite, the Lynx has a resolution of 160 x 102, a palette of 4096 colours with a maximum 16 colours on screen, stereo sound and, like the Game Boy, uses plug-in cartridges.

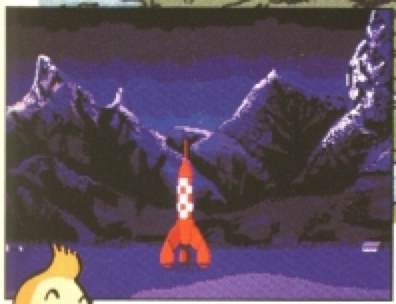
Lynx already sells in the States for $149.95 while the games go for $34.95. Six titles are now available: *California Games* (free with the system), *Blue Lightning, Impossible Mission, Monster Demolition, Gates Of Zendocon, Time Quests & Treasure Chests.*

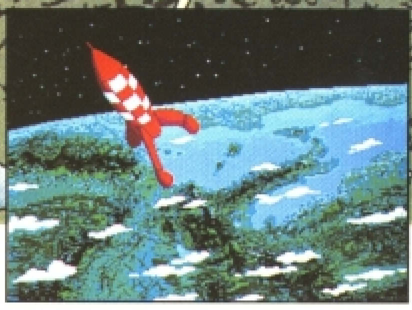
While Atari has touted late December as the UK launch date, it seems unlikely that the deadline will be met as no machines have been handed out to developers or the press. Easter next year seems a more plausible launch.

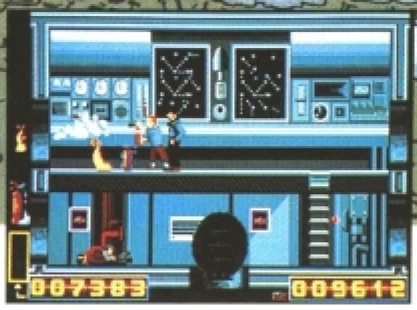
Look out for a full review of Lynx and the various games available as soon as we get our hands on one.

TINTIN ON THE MOON













"Hello control station! Here is the moon rocket. Tintin speaking. I have just regained conciousness. Everything seems OK, we are now taking over the controls of the rocket." Aboard the rocket, you will relive with Tintin and his friends the most exciting adventure the world has ever known. The first trip to the Moon!

Will you succeed in piloting the red and white rocket through space and achieve a flawless landing? Will you capture Colonel Boris, the traitor, who wants to make the expedition fail? Will you be able to find the extinguishers to put out the fires, even while floating in zero-gravity (which ins't everybody's idea of fun)? Will you succeed in finding and disarming the bombs and freeing your companions in order to get out of the rocket to make the first step on the Moon? You will discover all this by playing "TINTIN ON THE MOON", the first computer game based on the comic books by Hergé...

Before Armstrong there was Tintin and... may be you!



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★ A YAMAHA DX11 SYNTHESISER (WORTH £500) ★

Ten copies of *Moonwalker* (the computer game) ★ Ten rather 'chic' *Moonwalker* T-shirts

THE PLOT

Michael has to rescue his 'friend' from an evil 'Mr Big'. US Gold has given him four levels in which to do so. Luckily Michael is totally mad – which means he can change, at will, into a car, a spaceship, a banana and a giant tea-towel (or something rather similar). And adventure is never far away. In fact it's a song and dance's distance around every corner!

THE PRIZES

A YAMAHA DX11 'SYNTH'

Wow. That's first prize by the way, and it's worth about 500 quid. It is (of course) a MIDI keyboard, which means it can actually 'talk' to your computer, and they can make 'beautiful music' together (once they become fully aquainted, that is). Erm, specifications time. Eight voice multi-timbral operation. Advanced editing functions. A total of 224 Frequency Modulated voices. Stereo outputs and a 'pan effect'. Special effects such as 'echo' and 'auto chord set'. And loads more, but this isn't the blimming brochure – so the only way to find out more is to win the blasted thing.

TEN COPIES OF *MOONWALKER*

Wow. For ten 'second placers' by the way. A copy each of US Gold's rather bizarre 'game of the film'. It's well weird. State your computer type on the coupon.

TEN *MOONWALKER* T-SHIRT THINGIES

Wow. Erm, these are for the 'runners-up' by the way. Each 'chic' piece of kit features a white Wacko Jacko on a black background (which is sort of ironic – but we've all got used to that now, haven't we?).

THE REWARD



THE PATIENT



THE COMPO

It's all very simple – we've decided it's time for Michael to go 'under the knife' again. What should he have done this time though? Well, that's where you come in – and it's going to involve using scissors, glue and a bit of hard work (you can't expect to get a spanky new 'synth' for nothing, you know).

We've supplied you with the raw material (namely Michael's 'boat-race'), and the idea is for you to flick through all those Sunday colour supplements (or whatever) to find some facial parts that you feel would improve his overall countenance. Basically, cut 'em out and stick 'em on. You can only add up to *seven* bits, but apart from that it's entirely up to you what you do. The funniest one will win (but don't forget, it's still got to be 'recognisable' as Michael).

Remove the page when you've finished, fill in the coupon bit, and send the whole shebang to **Right – I'm Now Ready To Take Up Plastic Surgery Professionally Compo, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE**. And get your entries in before January 31st 1990.

THE COUPON

But the whole page is the coupon really, so... oh, we don't know, we'll shut up actually.

NAME ____________________

ADDRESS ____________________

____

____

'ZIP' ____________________

My computer is a ____________________
(no rude words please).

RULES

- Employees of Dennis Publishing and US Gold can't enter, because they're too talented (hem).
- Get your 'boat-races' in by January 31st 1990.
- The Ed's decision is final. No it isn't. Yes it is.





"TAKE NO PRISONERS, GIVE NO QUARTER, MAKE NO COMPROMISES"

X-OUT™

"X Out is not simply a game, more a multi-sensory assault – the first of a 'new wave' in software development that not only restates the principles of games programming, but then transforms the expectations of the new generation of games players. Computer entertainment developed on the computer for the computer."

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- ***8 levels each 160 screens.*** ● ***40 different aliens.***
- ***Multi graphics styles incl. lava, fire, crystal.***
- ***"Buy and sell" over 25 multi functional extra weapons.***
- ***Free style configuring of weapons and satellites.***



Screen shots from Amiga version.

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review

TURBO OUTRUN

Best not to mention the word *Outrun* to anyone from US Gold. It's not exactly had bundles of fun with the various er... You Know What licences. First there was You Know What, which was pretty lousy. Then there was You Know What *Europa*. Nuff said. Tempting fate and saying 'third time lucky' quite a lot, US Gold are back with *Turbo* You Know What. *Sean Kelly* and *Jackie Ryan* prepare their go-faster stripes and fluffy dice for an *Outrun* outing. (Whoops.)



This is where it all starts in New York. Ahead of you lies 100s of miles of dusty roads and no time for snogging. (Amiga screen)

Arcade conversions. Not much you can say about them really. As a rule, they generally involve driving very fast, kicking someone's head in, or shooting lots of people and/or spaceships. They're usually very simple too, 'cos the instuctions have got to fit on that little space on the cabinet between the fire button and the 'reject coin' slot.

***Turbo Outrun* falls into the 'driving very fast' category, and the main objective is to... er... drive very fast in a Ferarri across America, taking in some of the more scenic states and, it seems, just about every weather condition from blistering desert to freezing mountains. And that's it, scenario-wise. Usual joystick commands, usual scrolling scenery, other cars and scenic routes. Oh, and turbo boost and stage bonuses as well.**

Using turbo is a temporary means of making your car go faster than Fergie into a cake shop, but use it carefully 'cos if you use it too often (like more than twice in any one stage) it'll result in your car overheating pretty darn quickly.

Using turbo also means that some bends will be just about impossible to get round 'cos you're moving like a bullet, so it's best to use it on sections of road with which you are familiar. Should five sections be completed, then a bonus screen appears giving a choice of more add ons than Ken and Barbie's Barbeque Set. These fall into such categories as a high tuned engine, super grippy tyres or leather upholstery. (One of these isn't true)

Has US Gold improved on its previous You Know What outings, or is it yet another old banger? Let's take a test drive.



This is America, one of our larger colonies. As you can see, no boats can land there because it's surrounded by high cliffs. (Amiga screen)

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Turbo Outrun
PUBLISHER	U.S. Gold
PRICE	ST £19.99 Amiga £24.99
FORMAT	ST/Amiga
RELEASED	Out now

AMIGA A

Sean: I must admit that burning rubber, driving Ferarri Testacullas and snogging girlies is my idea of an evening well spent. So it's not suprising then that quite a few shiny coins found their way from my pockets into various *Outrun* arcade machines up and down the country. When U.S Gold released *Outrun* however, nothing changed cos it was pretty, er.. naff. Fortunately, *Turbo Outrun* is 10 billion times better and absoflippin'lutely fab.

First of all, let's do the graphics: nice, big, chunky and colourful. There's tons of variety in the sections, from daytime blizzards to nightime sunsets and starry nights over Minneapolis, and that's just the first handful. The scrolling is smooth and fast, and excellent for the Amiga, although it gets a little jerky when there's a lot on the side of the tracks.

The music, it has to be said, is horrid. An awful tune, played with what sounds like a sample of a cat being converted into a tennis racket. Still the in-game sounds are good, the usual old vroomy sounds with car horns and police sirens thrown in for good measure.

HASSLE FACTOR: 2
The game pauses between each stage.

On the ol' addictiveness and playability front, *Turbo Outrun* is absolutely brilliant. The little extras, like the turbo, make the game different from the usual racey ones and hitting turbo just as a police car reaches you, is fab.

Okay, it's yet another drivey game. But it's addictive and it's got an extremely good learning curve. It's great fun to play and without doubt a vast improvement on the previous *Outrun* incarnation. If racey games are your particular bag of spanners, then there's absolutely no reason not to buy *Turbo Outrun* for your Amiga. Well, there is if you have an ST, but then you could always buy the ST version, couldn't you?

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	88
S	SOUND	70
A	ADDICTIVENESS	86
E	EXECUTION	76

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

A brilliant racer that's bound to cheer up many a Christmas this year.

84

THE COURSE*

***WELL THE EASY BITS ANYWAY**



S'funny how loads of games manage to fit a snowy scene in when it starts getting near Christmas. (Amiga screen)



Heading into the sunset in Minneapolis, home of Prince and some happening grooves. (Amiga screen)



Nightime in Chicago. You'll notice that you're all alone by this stage, and that's because your girlie piled out and started snogging someone else when you stopped! The hussy!!!! (ST screen)

ST

Jackie: I must admit that I was expecting *Outrun Turbo* to be lousy. I saw an early version a while ago and wasn't very impressed. Fortunately US Gold has worked wonders in the meantime, and *Turbo Outrun* on the ST is, considering the limitations imposed on it by 16-bits et al, really really brill.

The sound though, it has to be said, is not brilliant. It was an awful set of tunes in the first place, and they haven't been improved at all by squeezing them through the ST's sound chip. Fortunately for all its sound inadequacies, the ST was born to scroll, and it certainly does it fabbily in *Turbo Outrun*. Mind you I must admit that I was slightly alarmed at the jerkiness of the scrolling at first. I reckon it would've been much better to have lost some of the incredibly detailed trackside graphics and use the saved memeory to get smoother scrolling. Still after a while you become oblivious to the jerky scrolling, as the addictiveness factor takes over.

HASSLE FACTOR: 1

Three disks, and you have to load the first two before you can get going, but it's relatively trouble free after that.

A big point in the favour of *Turbo* is the decent colouring and graphics, which are about as accurate as you're gonna get this side of an arcade entrance. All the elements squodged together (we won't mention the music) actually make a pretty darn addictive whole. Everyone in the office had a quick look and sneaked a quick go when they thought no one was looking, and if that isn't a recommendation of quality, I don't know what is.

Unfortunately, the scrolling lets it down a little but it's still a brill game. Not excellent but brill, and no one should be dissapointed if one Mister Santa Claus leaves a copy under the tree on Christmas Day.

THE VERDICT

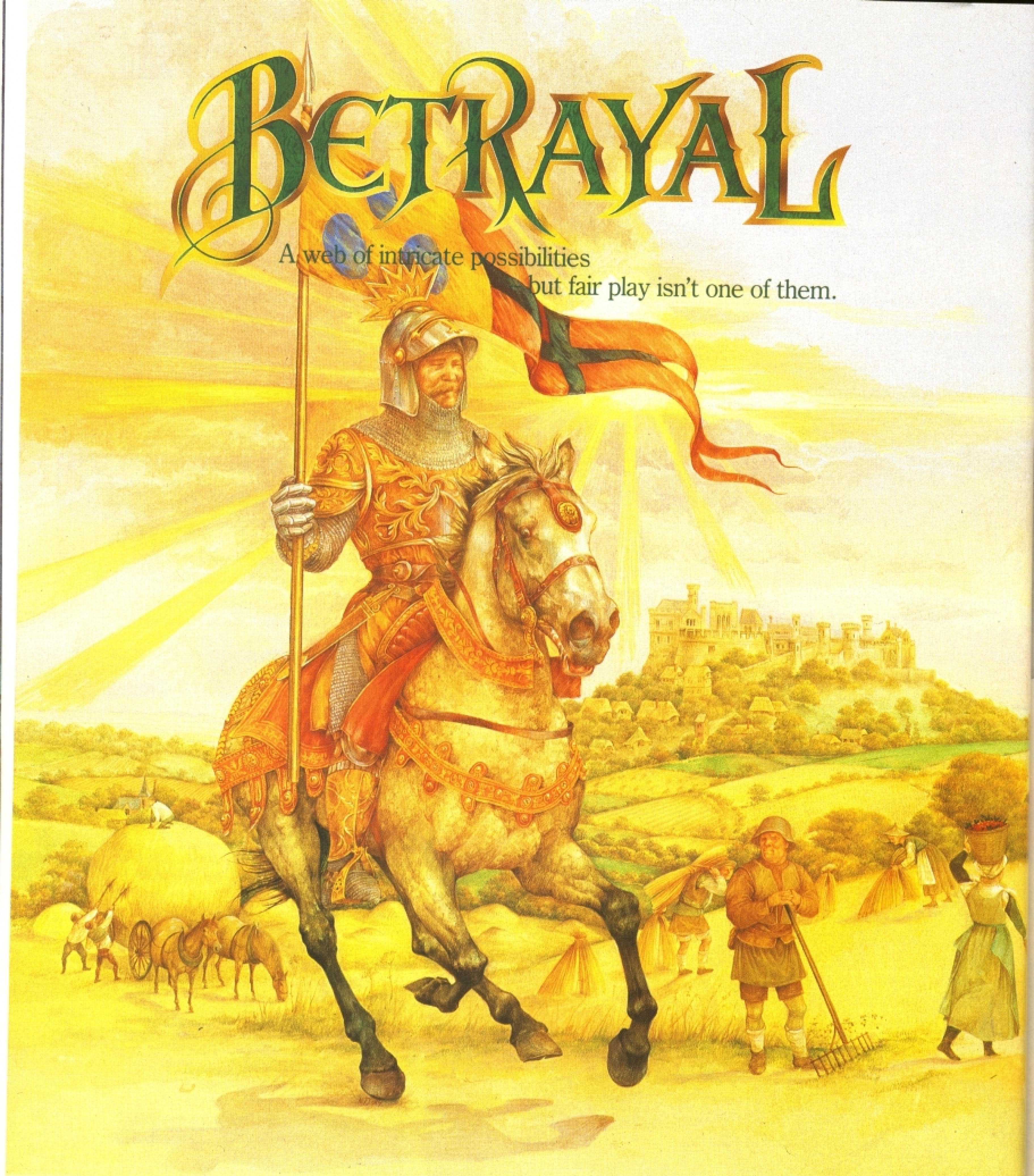
GRAPHICS	88
SOUND	72
ADDICTIVENESS	80
EXECUTION	77

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

Well good conversion, let down slightly by dodgy scrolling.

79

STOP



In the pursuit of power, the end justifies the means . . .

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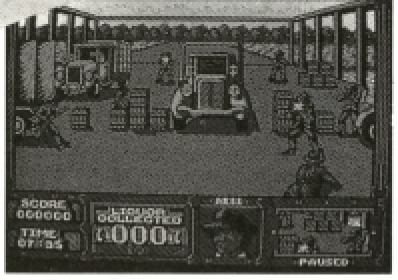
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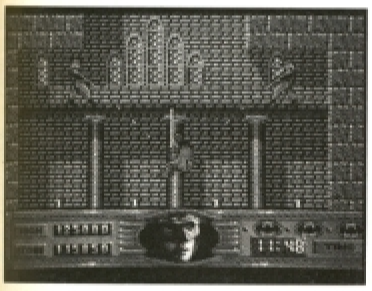




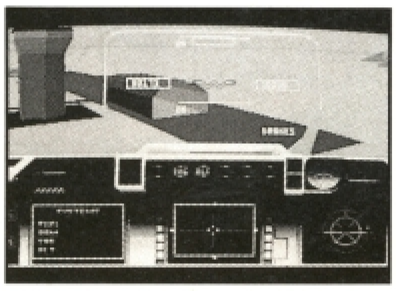
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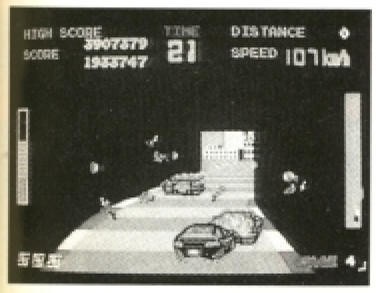
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BATMAN



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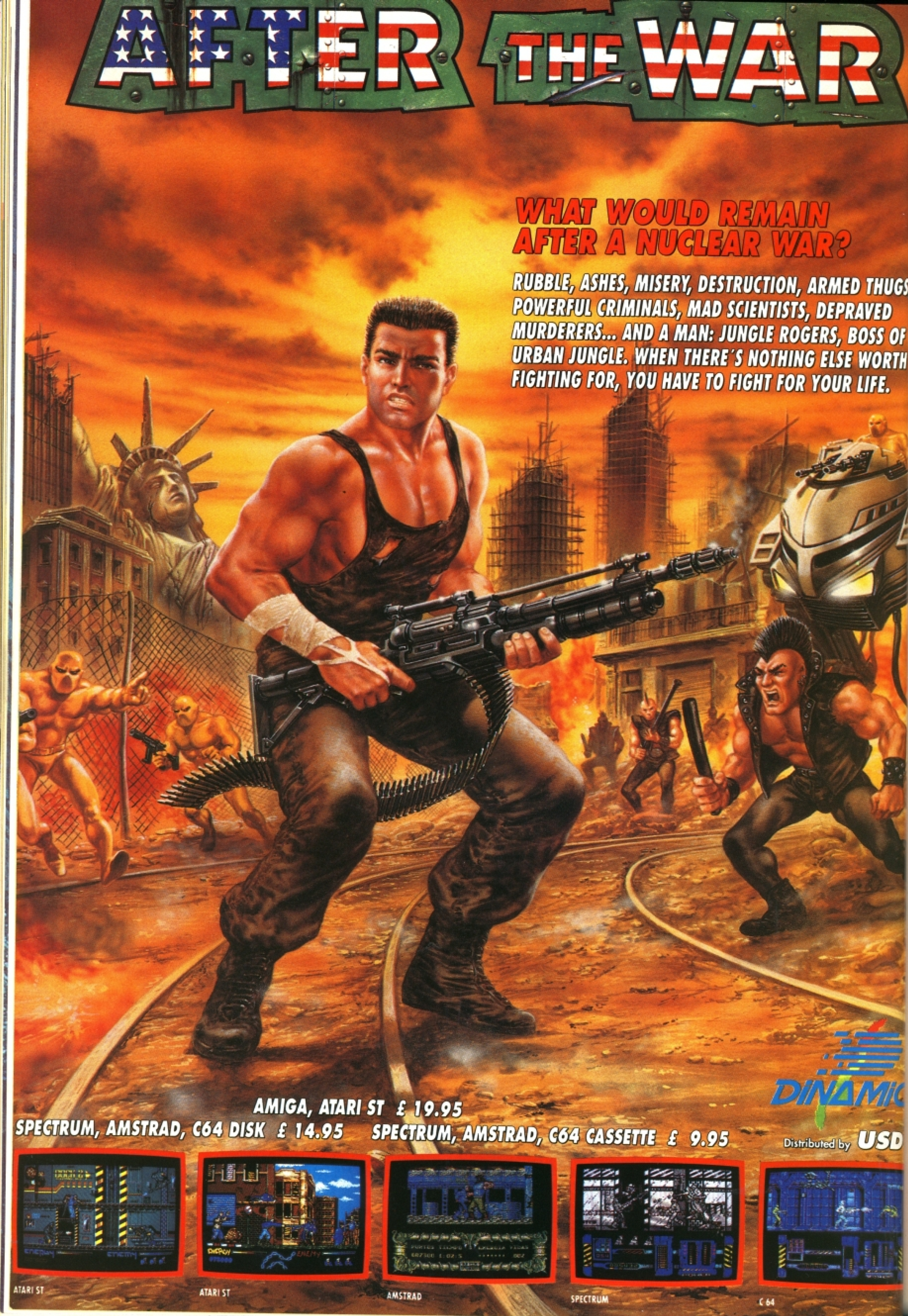
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IT CAME FROM THE DESERT

Having trouble with ants in your pants? Well you certainly will be if you load up *It Came from the Desert*, Cinemaware's latest small screen epic. *Sean Kelly* crawls into the wilderness to investigate.



Gosh. That rock formation looks remarkably like a giant ant. AARGH!! It IS a giant ant!! Quick, what are you waiting for! Shoot it!

Insects, eh? Where would the science fiction movies of the 50s be without them? I mean, *The Incredible Shrinking Man* would've looked a bit of a shandy-drinker if he'd been fighting a rather large mouse. Anyway, *It Came From The Desert,* tells the story of Lizardbreath, a small American town which is suddenly invaded by giant ants. Eeek!

In the game you play a geologist, and your first task is to persuade the Mayor that he's got a little insect problem, before leading the people of Lizardbreath into a final battle in the ants' nest.



Serves you right for having a stupid name like Mr. Sherman Tank Standard Issue Ammunition, doesn't it?

Sean: *It Came from the Desert* – several months late and just about squeezing onto an Amiga. *Desert* is yet another brilliantly drawn and conceived Cinemaware game, absolutely stuffed full of strategy, puzzles and numerous arcade sections to boot. The game is vast (which is why it's only available to those of us with one meg amigas) and has hours of playability.

In the early stages it seems like a fairly straightforward adventure and it appears to be mainly a case of being in the right place at the right time. Your first task is, to find the objects needed to persuade the mayor of Lizardbreath to introduce a general alert. But later in the game the arcade and strategy elements become more predominant.

There are three major arcade elements: ant shooting, escaping from the view from above hospital and finally, a view from above battle against hordes of giant ants. You're armed with dynamite, hand grenades... you name it, you've got it. That's just the basics, 'cos this game is huge! There's loads of places to visit, tons of people to chat to and a squillion other things to do. Considering the number of different elements in the game, it all hangs together very well and though it involves a fair amount of disk swopping, it's certainly worth the hassle. All the sections are really well programmed and great fun to play, and the variety means that it's virtually impossible to get bored. *Desert* has a brilliant atmosphere and tons of effort has gone into making sure that everything is correct. It's funny and spooky in turn and the music, (an excellent pastiche of the kind of soundtrack you find on all those old black and white movies), is perfect. Added to that are the in-game sound effects, which are the usual high quality samples.

I played it with a hint sheet for about three hours and even then, I felt that I had only scratched the surface of the game and it will be quite a while before anyone actually saves Lizardbreath from the rampaging ants. If your Amiga has the memory, then there can't be that many games around that are more worthy of 30 quid.

HASSLE FACTOR: 4
Tons of disk juggling, and only on 1 meg Amigas at that.



It seems that the dear old ants aren't the only things which have grown extraordinarily large.

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	It Came From The Desert
PUBLISHER	Cinemaware
PRICE	£29.99
FORMAT	Amiga (1 Meg Only)
RELEASED	Out Now

GRAPHICS	94	ADDICTIVENESS	90
SOUND	90	EXECUTION	89
OVERALL	91		

STOP

CRYSTAL TIPS*

*AND ALISTAIR

Right yew 'orrible lot, listen up. It's tips manoeuvres time. And this month Rookie *David McCandless* is taking a special yomp through *Laser Squad*. Don your combat gear and get ready to 'Chaaarge!'

LASER SQ

THE MISSIONS

MISSION ONE

THE ASSASSINS

(Cue evil chuckle). We stole in at the dead of night to punch Sterner Regnix's ticket forever. He-he-he. The Sarge said it was best not to split the squad as low morale and death would follow. We ported down near the central building right near an entrance. Harris glanced in at a window to admire the furniture. "Look! A real antique MFI desk chair!" Those were his last words. A security droid spotted him through the window, and an instant later the window and him were in little triangular pieces.





"Damn!" the Sarge shouted in Harris's ear (or the triangular piece which resembled his ear the most). "Now they know where we are, all the other battle droids will converge on us!" We decided to make a stand.

We opened the door and Jonlan launched a rocket into the first room. It exploded, destroying the walls and doors and about eight battle droids. More droids kept arriving and we just picked them off at leisure. After a quick tea break we went into the building (or what was left of it) after Regnix. We had to be careful since Regnix was using opportunity fire. In fact, we caught him coming out of the toilet, innocently

BATTLE DIARY

THURSDAY

The Sarge said it was not wise to prime a grenade to go off at the next turn and then put it in your lunchbox for later. The Sarge had made this mistake before and only survived by shoving the grenade down the nearest GI's gullet (it took Sarge weeks to wash the intestines out of his hair). The best procedure is to prime a grenade for at least two moves and then throw it where you want, remembering to leave enough movement points to get at least five blocks away. The furthest you can throw a grenade is eight blocks. The Sarge had another amusing anecdote about that point but it had the same 'intestinal' punch line. I laughed anyway.

FRIDAY

The Sarge warned us that auto-cannons and rocket launchers are the most dangerous weapons. They tend to destroy great swathes of vegetation when they go off, and since most men in the Army are of vegetable descent, we were in danger every time they went off. The safest way to use them is not to aim at walls, doors or members of the squad unless you are a safe five blocks away. The Sarge said he would beat up anyone who killed themselves by accident.

SATURDAY

Private Anderson has panicked. We left him alone without other men for too long. He dropped his weapon and just stood there, pale white, quivering like a big fat mass of shandyness. Typical. The Sarge said the kindest thing we could do was give him a primed grenade and tell him to walk off in a direction (towards the enemy), while we two covered. Worked as well. The Sarge asked if anyone else felt like panicking. There were no takers.

SUNDAY

"Don't forget to pillage the base, my lads!" the Sarge exclaimed after the successful completion of yet another mission. I'm not quite sure what 'pillage' means but I went along with the other guys anyway, smashing all the windows, breaking

QUAD

ARY OF A ROOKIE

se to / the / our / had / d only / ade / (it took / estines / edure / east / where / ave / et at / rthest / ight / r / point / o- / are / They / of / and / e of / off. / not to / rs of / e five / e / lled / . We / en for / on / e, / said / was / l tell / two / arge / s. / e, / after / ure / ay, / king

the doors, and causing general mayhem and destruction. Then we came across some mysterious locked cannisters. We broke them open immediately with a quick grenade and found a secret stash of weapons. Wow!

MONDAY
(Bank Holiday in Scotland)
The Sarge has taught us a cunning new strategy! "Since we are merely two-dimensional representations of real people," he said, "we can get away with thinking in relative two-dimensional parallels." What this actually means in practice is that if an enemy is quite a distance away but directly in line with you, you can orientate your sight just in front of you, thus reducing the distance and the percentage chance of you missing. The shot goes to its target and carries on, to blat the enemy.



TUESDAY
The Sarge has now taught us to use the opportunity fire technique. "If you've got the opportunity then blow someone's brains out!" as the Sarge is fond of saying (and in fact, doing). He says that whenever you can smell the enemy you should always use opportunity fire. The scum-sucking alien filth might jump out of any corridor, so cover every single one."Bravo Sarge!" I shouted in a very loud voice.

WEDNESDAY
"You can never be over-cautious in this game," the Sarge said. "Think, move, act and drink milk like a cat. Never go around a corner if you want to be left with enough movement points for opportunity. But there is a fine line between cautiousness and shandyness." The Sarge is such a great man; I put him on a par with the great thinkers of our age: Aristotle, Darwin, Einstein, the Sarge.

★★★ ZERO ★★★ COMPLETE SOLUTION*

spraying marigold air-freshener about. He spotted Anderson first and fired. But he was a completely crap shot and his paltry armour was no defence against the three rockets, eight grenades, four laz-beams, the shot-gun pellets and explosives we simultaneously fired at him (we had to make sure).

MISSION TWO
MOON-BASE ASSAULT

The moon base was big, very big, bigger than I had expected. Just to make things difficult for the defenders of the base we decided to attack from two different directions. The Sarge lined up the squad outside in the vacuum, chose two captains and told them to pick sides. One squad was deployed at the top right of the base; the other at the bottom left. It seemed that the enemy had guessed our strategy as it had a few men guarding the bottom left. We only lost one man in the surprising little mêlée that followed. The Sarge said there wasn't much point in blowing up the generators since there were too many and besides it was quite fun to blow up the defenders instead. So we headed for the centre room.

Meanwhile the other squad had run into a little bit of difficulty. Private Smalles thought he spotted something and let loose a quick round to kill it, oblivious of the fuel drums around him. He hit one and set off a chain reaction that slaughtered most of the team. Jonlan only survived by closing the airlock and trapping the squad inside (he's learning from the Sarge). The Sarge said to be wary of doors. "Be careful when opening doors," he advised. "A defender gimp might be hiding behind them." I quite cunningly devised a simple little solution which involved sending Android Barker through first (I hate Androids). Anyway it seemed that the enemy had congregated to make a stand in the centre room. Bit of a stupid strategy really. We just fired a few rockets in there and massacred all the defenders.

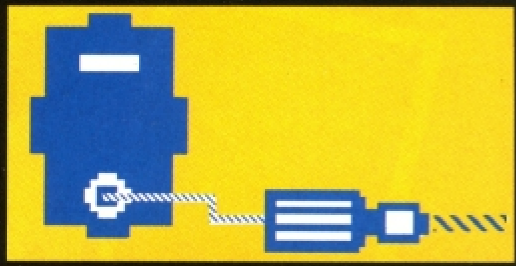
MISSION THREE
RESCUE FROM THE MINES

"Stupid incompetent fools! See if I'm going to waste time and money rescuing the foetus-brained idiots! Shouldn't have got captured in the first place!" said the Sarge. So we didn't do Mission Three.

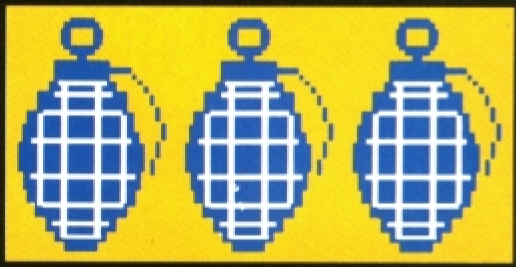
***Well, 99% complete!**

ARM UP

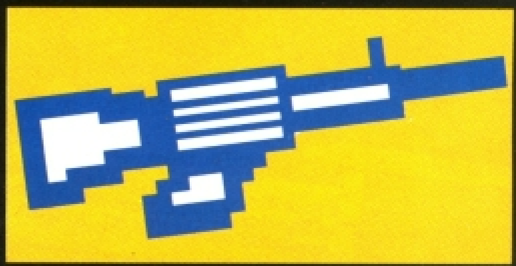
Here are the Sarge's top five items of artillery, in ascending order of destructiveness. Price in brackets.



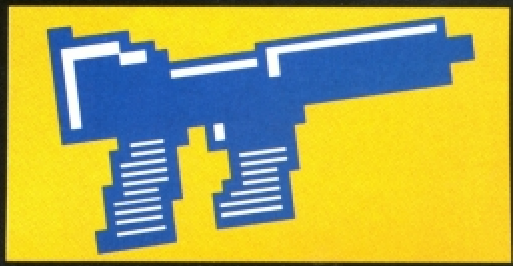
▲HEAVY LASER (17): This gun weighs a ton, but makes up for it by having 50 shots. Few things can stand up to repeated shots from a heavy laser.
Gratuitous Violence Rating: 6



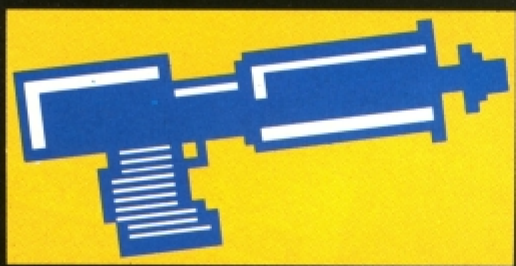
▲MARSEC AUTOGUN (21): Expensive but essential. Very powerful at short range but a bit crap at long distance. Has the can't-live-without it auto-fire ability.
Gratuitous Violence Rating: 7



▲GRENADE (4): Essential if you want to do some serious mutilation. Limited range (eight blocks) when throwing but will destroy almost anything with a direct hit.
Gratuitous Violence Rating: 8



▲MARSEC AUTO-CANNON (25): Amazing piece of hardware this. Has the ability to destroy whole acres of fauna with one shot. As a result it's a tad dangerous in confined spaces, where it has the ability to destroy acres of GIs. Essential on the last scenario.
Gratuitous Violence Rating: 9



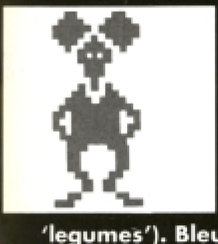
▲ROCKET LAUNCHER (30): This gorgeous piece of hardware can cause horrific damage to scenery and soldiers alike. Expensive, heavy, unwielding – but there's a price on luxury.
Gratuitous Violence Rating: 100


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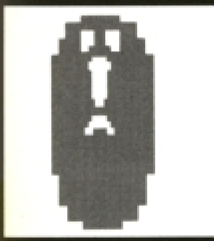


THE ENEMY

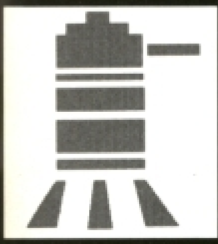
Get the low-down on the high-tech baddies



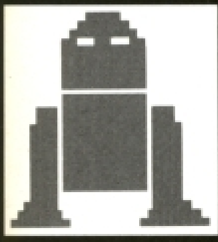
SECTOIDS: The greasiest and slimiest and greenest of all the enemies we've had to face. They use weapons, usually Marsec auto rifles, stolen or captured (and later boiled with soy sauce and eaten on a platter of raw 'legumes'). Bleugh. Kill instantly.
Danger Factor: 5



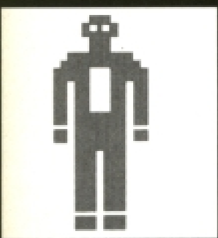
BATTLE DROIDS: These are sort of dalek derivatives which are only found in the first scenario and seem to be made of balsa wood. One shot from a good sized catapult would do the trick. Still, they are armed with blasters (with 255 shots) and they rarely miss. Shoot first and say "You dalek git!" later.
Danger Factor: 6



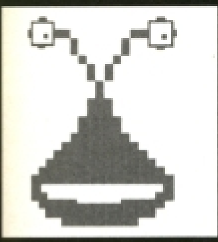
PATROL DROID: These triped, skinny excuses for robots use Zeekers and they never mizz (sic). They are also very agile and have over 70 movement points. It's a pity then that they're really crap and only take a single shot to shatter.
Danger Factor: (don't even register)



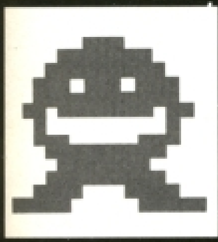
BIG BATTLE DROIDS: Don't let the charming, cuddly 'Metal Mickey' looks deceive you, these robots are serious trouble. Completely impregnable from the front, they can shrug off a grenade attack, laugh chestily at a heavy laser, and say "Bangladesh" to an auto-cannon. Punching one of these robots' tickets requires you to get around the back and shoot them up the bot. Even then you'll need a good10 shots to finish it off.
Danger Factor: 10



CYBER DROIDS: Blasphemously sculptured in the hallowed shape of man, these can be quite deadly if allowed to infiltrate the camp. Armed with a terminator (how they carry Arnie around I don't know) these robo-guys never miss.
Danger Factor: 7



WATER DWELLER: These ugly, gooey, bug-eyed, translucent aliens are a sight to behold, if in fact you get to see them at all. They are almost invisible in water and have a tendency to sneak up and gob lumps of acid spit at you. But they are aquatic and cannot stray out of the water.
Danger Factor: 8



VENOMOUS SPLURGES: These big-gobbed alien pacmen are quite easy to destroy. Your average venomous splurge attacks with his (wait for it) venomous spit, trundles around on venomous legs, before consuming you with its venomous teeth. These yellow things use the vegetation for cover but are awful shots.
Danger Factor: 5

MISSION FOUR

DEFENDERS

To defend the namby-pamby geological base we deployed ourselves in the centre and planned our defence. Jenkins and Powells were going to drop back from mid-field, while Anderson, Jonlan and me were going to act as sweepers, clearing the field for the goalie. At half time we were going to poison the opposition's oranges.

The enemy were going to enter from the left and so we placed a guard at every horizontal avenue across the base. All except the bottom avenue, where the guards must be out of sight. This was because the Sarge knew that the dreaded Battle Droid was going to come along there. The only way to destroy the dreaded droid was to come at it from the rear and shoot it up the bum. This meant that we had to leave two men in a suitable alcove until the droid passed. The men were then to leap out and throw something small and explosive up the droid's 'oil outlet'.

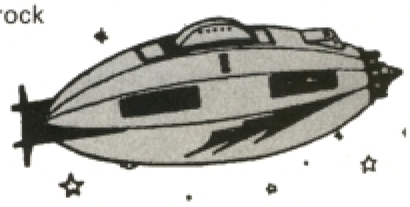
When the attack started we used the scanner to find out which airlock had been breached, and so we knew where the bulk of the attack was going to be coming from. The Sarge warned us not to group too closely together for two reasons. Firstly, people might talk and secondly, if one of us misfired our weapon, we'd all die. The defence went fine. We were well prepared with lots of extra ammo to shoot the 1000s of robot scum who poured in. When it was all over we had only lost two-thirds of the squad and had time to search the mysterious locked caskets in and around rooms in the base.

MISSION FIVE

PARADISE VALLEY

Paradise Valley is hell on Earth. Or at least it would be if it was actually located on the planet Earth. Anyway, it is quite a horrible place, infested with venomous splurges, water dwellers and sectoids. We were 'ported down and spent the first few moves saying "Cor! What a smell!" and making jokes about Anderson's feet and armpits.

Then we used our auto-cannons to clear the vegetation away, so that no venomous splats (or whatever they're called) could hide in them. The Sarge said there were some cunning underground tunnels underground somewhere. The entrances were cunningly concealed. We only knew they were there if the cursor described the spot as nothing, not even 'ground'. "Don't walk into the bushes," the Sarge said just as Jonlan walked into the bushes. "They're as hard as rocks and will cut you up." Jonlan re-emerged all cut up, looking like he had been struck with some rock metaphors. "Shoot the bushes first!" the Sarge explained.

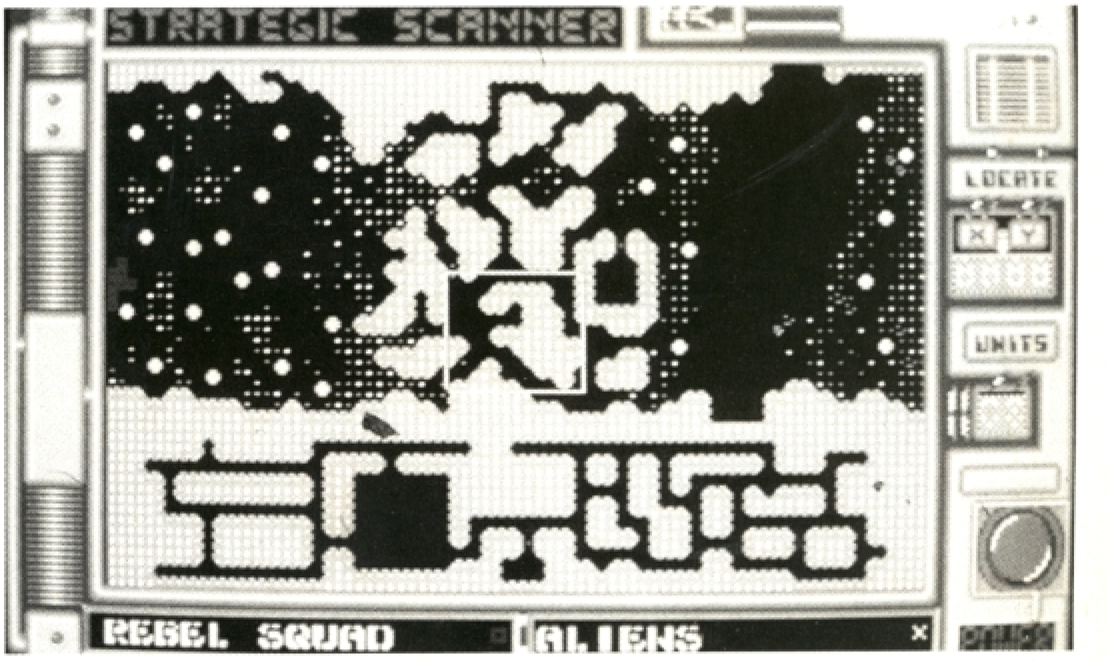


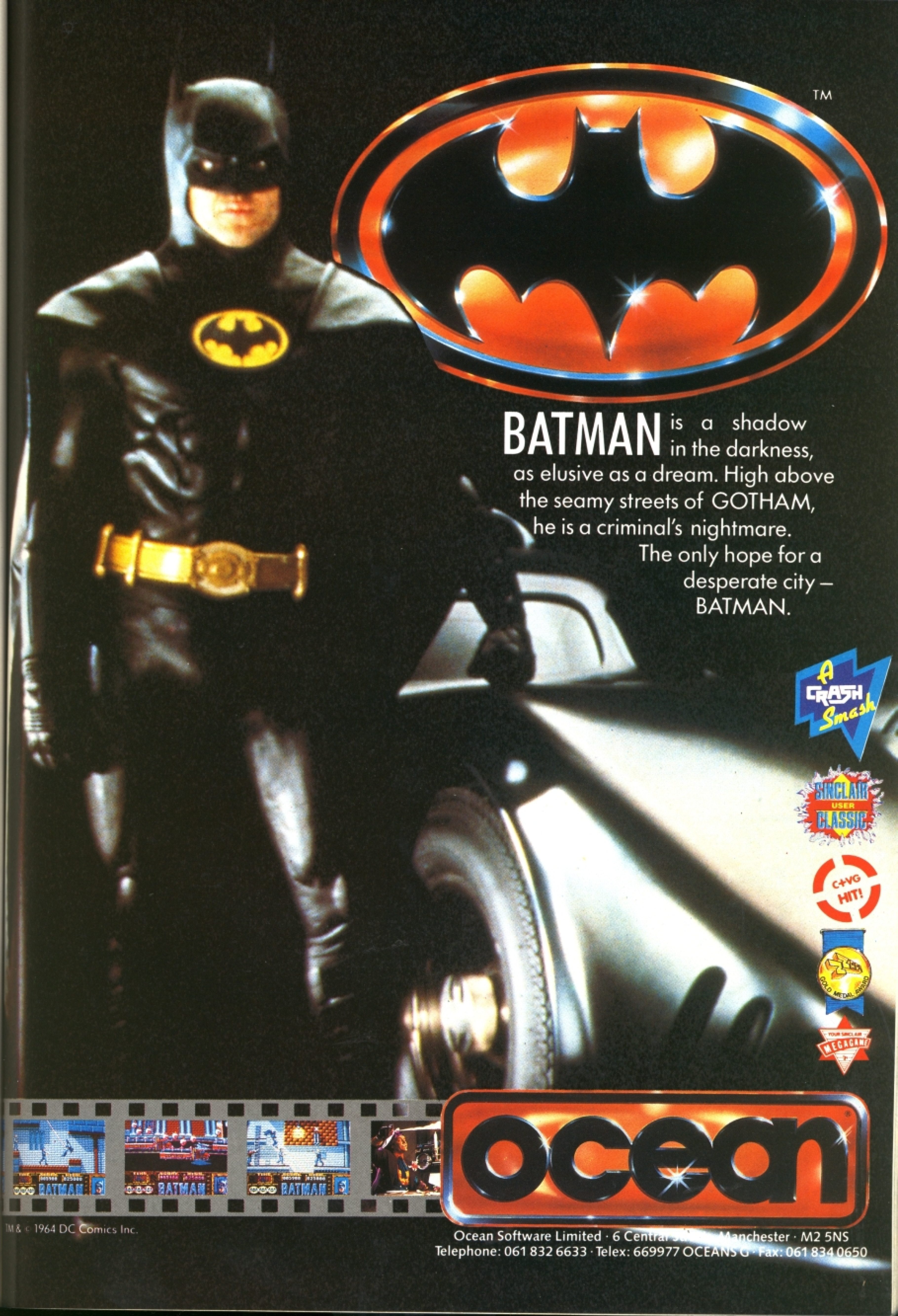
"But not with an auto-cannon. The back blast will kill us all." We eventually found a secret entrance in among the cliffs.We had to walk on the secret entrance square and after a funny noise we were teleported down into the subterranean passages. Unfortunately the way we'd chosen teleported us straight into a prison cell. Brilliant. We used a grenade to bust out of there and then we found ourselves in a big maze, infested with Sectoids.

And here we still are, months later. I've got a beard now and we've been attacked by more venomous stains and more sectoids and even had a run in with a few water-dwellers. The Sarge is acting a bit strange lately. He keeps dribbling slowly out of the side of his mouth and every now and then he says "Shlobba–dop". The others think he's crazy. I think he's a great man.

TIPS FOR THE TOP
Send all your tips to David McCandless, Crystal Tips, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE. You could win yourself a spiffing prize!

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ZERO MAP

BATMAN

THE MOVIE

BAT-KEY

Fit the shapes into the holes within 30 seconds or you'll explode!

THE JOKER Get him with a batarang on level 1, and the bat-rope on level 5.

LADDERS You can go up. You can go down. Hours of fun for all the family.

ACID BATH Jack Napier has a quick dip and emerges as – gasp!– The Joker!

END OF LEVEL Blimey. You are a smart-arse, aren't you?

START A bit self-explanatory, really.

BRICK WALL Impossible to travel through unless you're a master of astral body projection.

ACID DROPS No, not the sweeties. To be avoided at all costs.

PLATFORM Sling your bat-hook at one of these and swing out of danger. Jeronimo!

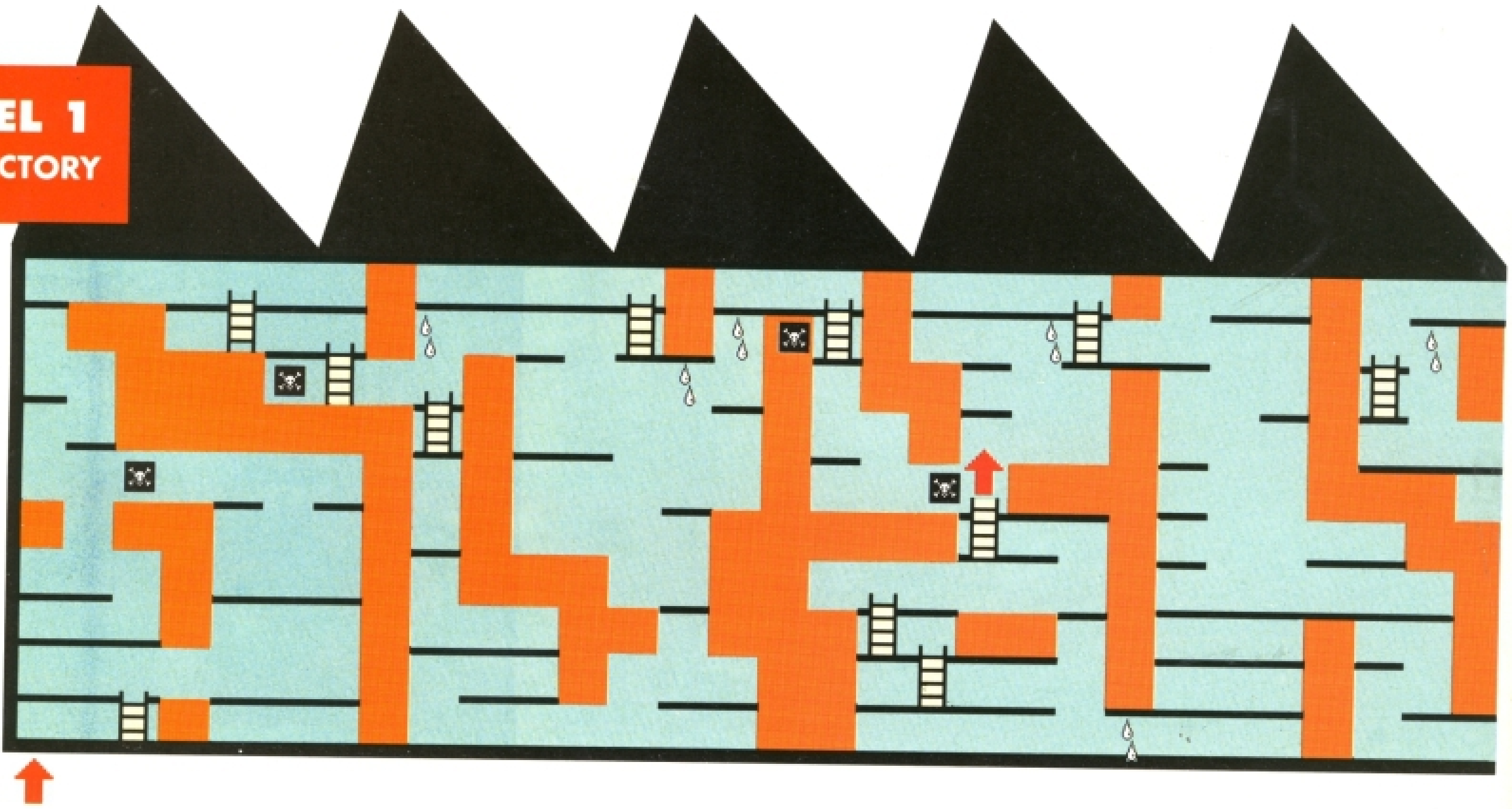
CHEMICAL LEAK Poisonous gas leaking intermittently.

SPIKES To be avoided unless you want more perforations than a Tetley advert.





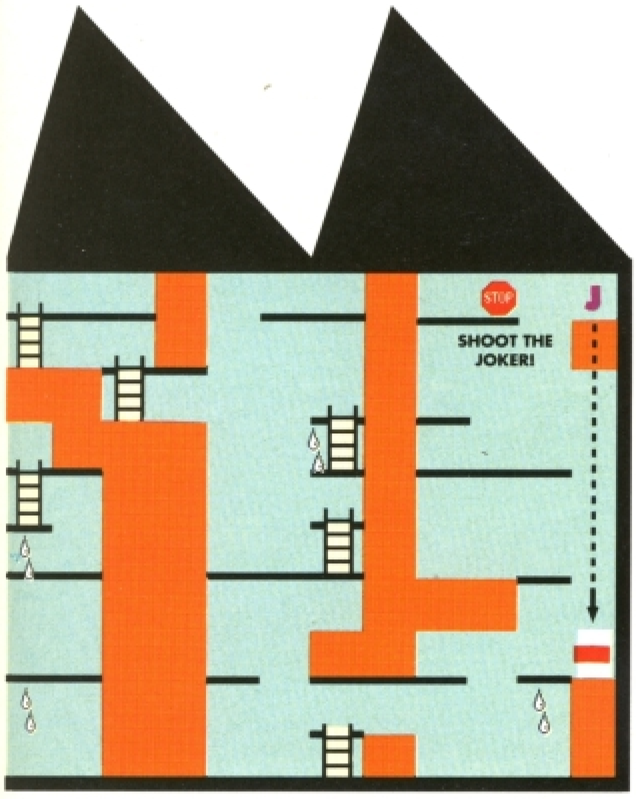
LEVEL 1
THE FACTORY



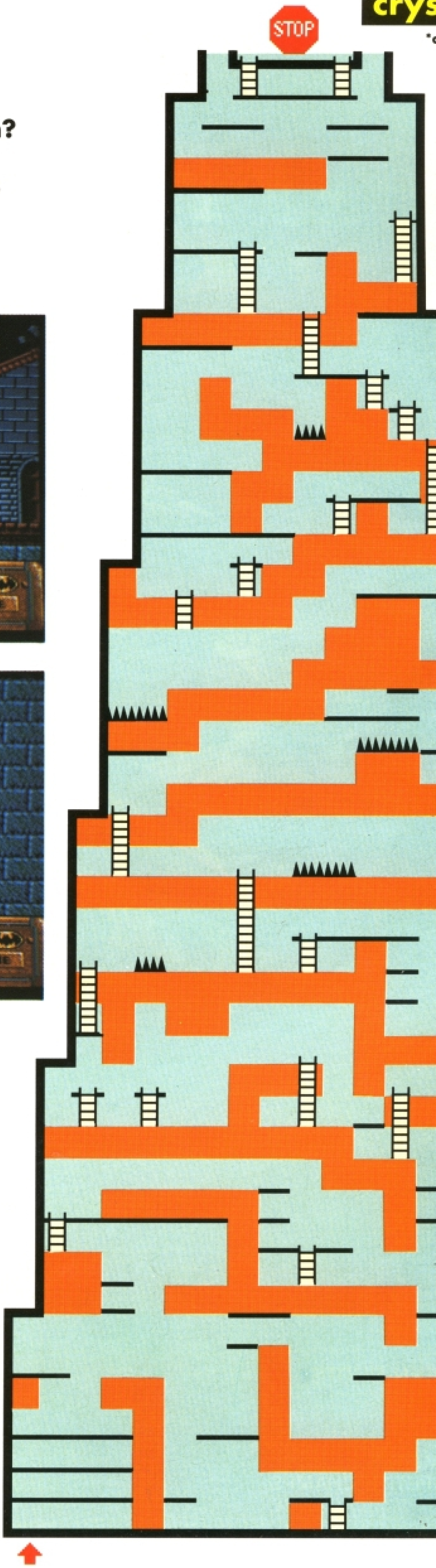
"Holy Uncanny Photographic Complex Mental Processes, Batman! It's a map!"
"What are you doing here, Robin? You're not in the film... "
ZERO dons a dodgy pair of tights and goes in search of Life, the Universe and levels 1 and 5 of Ocean's Batman...

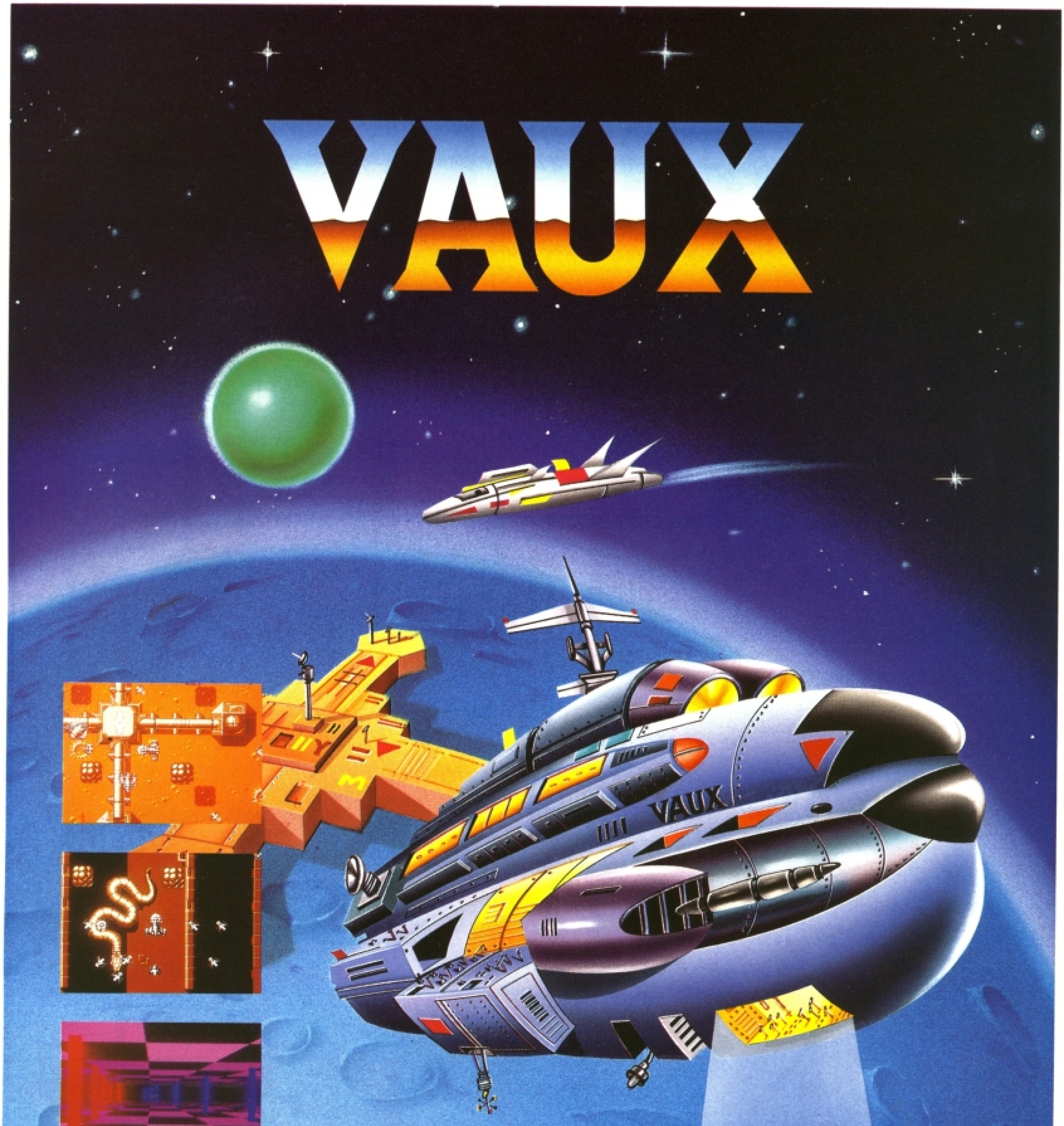






LEVEL 5
THE CATHEDRAL TOWER





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IMPROVE YOUR HEX LIFE!

It's time for *Jon North* to go poking and hacking his way into your hex problems. Nosey old git!

Right, you lot. I've got a bone to pick with you. Not only was last month's IYHL Amiga only, but so is this month's. And why? Because none of you have sent me any ST or PC POKEs. Sure the Amiga's a great machine but some ST and PC stuff would be a (rare) treat. Anyway enough griping and on with the show.

BATMAN (Amiga)

I vowed that the first letter from my mailbag that I opened would get published. Just as well really, because it contained a little gem just like it's writer, **David Brown** from, erm... sorry, David, I've gone and lost your address – send it next time you write. Anyway, it's infy lives for Ocean's *Batman* so type it in, save it if you want and RUN it with the *Batman* disk in the drive.

```
10 REM Batman by David Brown
20 t=0:DIM code%(255)
30 FOR f=0 TO 151
40 READ a$:a=VAL("&h"+a$)
50 code%(f)=a:t=t+a
60 NEXT f
70 IF t<>1647590 THEN STOP
80 cheat=VARPTR(code%(0))
90 CALL cheat
100 DATA 41fa,14,43f9,7,fe00,2f09,707f
110 DATA 22d8,51c8,fffc,4e75,70ff,2c78
120 DATA 4,4eae,feb6,2200,5280,6700,a6
130 DATA 4bfa,14e,3afc,400,429d,3ac1
140 DATA 93c9,4eae,feda,2ac0,2a8d,2b4d
150 DATA 8,589d,4295,4bfa,f0,1abc,5
160 DATA 3b7c,30,a,41ed,38,2b48,6,41fa
170 DATA c0,7000,7200,43fa,ca,4eae,fe44
180 DATA 4a80,6600,5c,700c,99cc,6118
190 DATA 7002,49f9,7,0
200 DATA 610e,45ec,1fe,47fa,26,613a
210 DATA 4eec,c,43fa,c2,22fc,0
220 DATA 400,22cc,4299,7230,93c1,3340
230 DATA 1c,3341,12,4eee,fe38,2057,217c
240 DATA 5354,4152,6ce,317c,5400,6d2
250 DATA 45e8,1cc,47fa,a,34fc,4ef9,248b
260 DATA 4e75,43f8,560,2f09,22fc,1038
270 DATA 1281,32bc,4e75,45f9,7,60a,47fa
280 DATA 4,60dc,4278,ec,223c,38e,5a2
290 DATA 203c,11fc,0,b0fc,4d28,6706
300 DATA 223c,374,596,2180,1000,31bc
310 DATA 303c,1006,4841,2180,1000,31bc
320 DATA 4e71,1006,4ed0,7472,6163,6b64
330 DATA 6973,6b2e,6465,7669,6365,0
```

For those starting out in Amiga hacking, David points out that lines 100-190 of the DATA load the game, and lines 200 and 210 are the interrupt sequence. Thanks for helping out, David.

DAVID'S P.S.

Before he signed off, David said that you can type ALF into the Xybots hi-score table for infinite energy, and ROBOCOPETTER on the Arkanoid II title screen to continue where you left off when you die. I know I said there would be no cheats in this column but rules are there to be broken. (*You're fired. Ed.*) Erm... except his ones.

GET DEBRIEFED BY BINKY BERKMANN

Trapped behind enemy lines on a stolen German motorbike, fearless Binky heads for the Swiss border – and the giant barbed wire barricade. But the dastardly Bosch is in hot pursuit.



Will Binky make it back to Blighty? There's a stack of mail waiting for him if he does. If *you're* stuck in a game, or have any tips, write to **Wing Commander 'Binky' Berkmann VC (Posthumous)** at the address on the right.

IDIOT'S GUIDE

Foolproof (well, almost) instructions for all you would-be Amiga hackers out there.

1) Load your Workbench disk.
2) Insert your Extras disk and load Amiga Basic.
3) Type the listing EXACTLY as it appears here. When you get a "&" after numbers bigger than 65536, don't worry – all's well.
4) Save it to disk if you're going to want to use it again.
5) Insert the game disk. If you get requesters saying you have a corrupt disk, cancel them. It's simply because your disk is not Amiga DOS format (because of protection systems and the like) and doesn't actually mean you have a duff copy.
6) Run the listing.
7) If you get an OUT OF DATA error, check the data – you've missed out a number or a comma somewhere.
8) If the program STOPs, check the data – you've typed at least one number wrongly.
9) The listing's fine, so the game will now load. If the game doesn't load immediately, press either the left mouse button or the space bar – one of the two will work.
10) The game will now load with infinite squibbleys or whatever.

ROBOCOP (Amiga)

Talking of Robocop(etters), here's an infinite power routine, courtesy of **Frostbyte** from Freestyle U.K. (again). RUN it then click the left mouse button.

```
10 REM Robocop by Frostbyte
20 t=0
30 FOR f=266240 TO 266384 STEP 2
40 READ a$:a=VAL("&h"+a$)
50 POKEW f,a:t=t+a: NEXT f
60 IF t<>432850 THEN STOP
70 c=266240: CALL c
80 DATA 41f9,df,f000,317c,4000,9a
90 DATA 3168,6,180,839,6,bf,e001
100 DATA 66f0,317c,c000,9a,203c,a
110 DATA 0,5380,66fc,2c78,4,207c
120 DATA fe,88c0,43f9,7,0,303c,145
130 DATA 12d8,51c8,fffc,22fc,dbfc
140 DATA 0,22fc,7e,4e5d,32bc,4e75
150 DATA 4eb9,7,1a,41fa,a,2948,31c
160 DATA 4eec,c,41fa,e,23c8,7,a454
170 DATA 4ef9,6,6e,41fa,a,21c8,55dc
180 DATA 4ef8,1188,33fc,6000,2,1e6a
190 DATA 4ef9,1,8200,0
```

Well that's it for this month. Sorry, ST and PC fans but I should have something for you by next month (if I don't I'll be out of a job!). In the meantime, send your ST, PC or Amiga hacks (disk or listing, I don't mind) to **Jon North, IYHL, Zero, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE.** Byee!

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Decide upon fight tactics according to the strength and weakness of your boxers, what are their weaknesses? sorry – you'll have to find out. Work as a second during rounds. Use sponge, flat iron, towel, water etc. Opponents use intelligence to decide upon their next round plans so beware.

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review

ONSLAUGHT

Duncan MacDonald and Sir Jonathan Davies discover that there are some things more difficult than trampolining in a suit of armour. Surviving for longer than eight pico-seconds in Hewson's new game *Onslaught* seems to be one of them.





This is where it all starts and at the moment things aren't looking too hot.

Jonathan: *Onslaught* is a bit on the epic side. It's set in the land of Gargore, where dozens of warring kingdoms are at each others throats and armies of 1000s are being slaughtered by the minute. You're cast as a Fanatic, a solitary warrior with the strength of a whole battalion. Your aim is to beat up as many people as possible and nick all their land. Study the map-screen, decide where to have a crack at the enemy and the game flips into scrolling mode.

The idea is to clear the battlefield of enemies but before this can be achieved, you have to capture the enemy's banner to prevent more troops appearing. The battle then continues through a couple more stages, culminating in a Mind Battle – broadly similar to the 'mega-alien' found in the majority of games these days. Defeat this and you win the campaign.

Onslaught wouldn't be complete without the many add-on weapons available. They appear as shields in the wake of your defeated foe. Up to eight can be carried at once and they come in very handy for supplementing your standard issue mace.

The baddies have a few tricks up their sleeves too though. Not only are you fallen upon by mere foot soldiers, but you also have to be wary of the larger, nastier assailants which come in a variety of guises. Mines are also a problem – try not to step on them.

The graphics are so detailed and so many baddies pile onto you at once, that it's sometimes difficult to tell exactly what's going on.

The graphics make imaginative use of the Amiga's palette – if anything they may be slightly overdone. Practically everything's a different colour and there are some breathtaking backdrops. The music is lump-in-the-throat-inducing.

Another point worthy of note is the Editor. Not our own (although he may be very noteworthy indeed), but *Onslaught's* map editor which allows you to alter the state of Gargore at will.

Although initially *Onslaught's* appeal seems to lie in its adventure game setting and the pseudo-strategy bit with the map, it's really a shoot 'em up through and through. And a darned good one too. Hewson has once again come up with a cunning interfusion of violence, variety and graphical fabness which, while it hardly breaks any moulds, certainly looks different. Above all *Onslaught* is a fun game to play and should certainly fend off Old Father Time admirably.

HASSLE FACTOR: 0
All parts working nicely thank you, doctor.

***Onslaught* is an 'invade and conquer all the squares of the map' strategy game combined with a selection of vertically and horizontally scrolling hack 'em ups. Choose a 'square' on the map screen and plunge into battle. Winning a battle allows you to take possession of the square and so progress. But some territories are harder to occupy – this is where the strategy comes in. Filling the map with your 'colour' is the object of the game.**

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Onslaught
PUBLISHER	Hewson
PRICE	£24.99
FORMAT	ST/Amiga
RELEASED	Out Now

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	88
S	SOUND	79
A	ADDICTIVENESS	81
E	EXECUTION	85

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

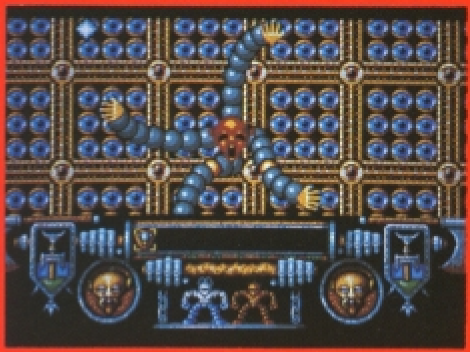
Onslaught is a bit of everything really, but underneath it's just joystick depraving action all the way. Most enjoyable.

84





Red sky in the morning – shepherd's warning. Brown, yellow, purple, grey and white sky at night – shepherd's... er, erm... er, shepherd's uum... um (*pie? Ed*).



Streuth! A Mind Battle. And that thing in the middle doing the Al Jolson impression certainly seems to mind. I wish it would keep its hands to itself.



Open wide. Say "aaaaaaaah". Yuk. You've got 'beri beri'.



Doner an' chips, Sir? Okay. You want chilli sauce wiv it?

Dunc: Here's a mildly interesting fact – I actually own a suit of armour. It dates from about 1200 AD, which means it's, um, (gets calculator out and presses totally wrong buttons) 430,000 years old. *(800 actually. Ed)*. The reason I mention owning this medieval piece of kit is this: every time a 'knights to battle' type game comes up, I don the metal garment before playing. Firstly it helps me 'get into the atmosphere' of the proceedings and secondly, it lets me know how accurate the in-game 'clang' effects of steel against steel are. When the computer goes 'clang', I quickly pick up a hammer and strike my leggings, comparing the two notes.

So how do the in-game clangs of *Onslaught* ST match up to the real McCoy? Rather well actually,which for me is always a bonus – and it ups the total score by one point. But what about the rest of the game though?

Well, *Onslaught* claims to be an arcade/strategy game. And, to a certain extent, that's what it is – you have to read the manual to know what you're doing and you have to spend a little bit of time working out your route on the map-screen. Essentially though, *Onslaught* is a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up (well, a series of horizontally scrolling shoot 'em ups actually). And, my word, what a shoot 'em up it is. I haven't been attacked by so many things in such a short a space of time since I rather foolishly entered the local Mosque wearing a pair of muddy Doctor Martins and an 'I know where Salman Rushdie's hiding, but I'm not telling you lot' T-shirt.

There's an almost infinite number of sprites in *Onslaught*, and they're all trying to kill you. Luckily, you can obtain power-up icons (to help you fight back), which come in the form of different coloured shields and scrolls. Aha, colour. The game has been crammed with every single colour known to man This, along with the way everything moves rather speedily, makes for some confusion and that's on the flashy office-monitor screen. If your ST happens to be attatched to a ropey old TV set (like mine is at home) then things are going to be even more bewildering.

Confusing colouring aside though, it must be said that *Onslaught* has got absolutely tremendous graphics, and they're animated nicely too (plus there's brilliant sound). However, the arcade action is actually too frenzied and cluttered, and the 'weapons-select system is a bit awkward. I may not have the quickest reactions in the country, but I'm not totally useless. *(He is actually. Ed)*. Basically, *Onslaught* is too hard. Much too hard. Slow the pace down (or remove 20 per cent of the sprites) and you'd have a really decent game – but as it stands not all of you are going to get very far. Gripes aside though, it's not at all bad – but then you don't expect bad games from Hewson. Right, now to get out of this bloody suit of armour. Got a tin-opener anybody?

HASSLE FACTOR: 4
The screens are too busy to see exactly what's going on. Athough you can take lots of damage, getting continuously killed seems to be the main theme.

THE VERDICT

G	GRAPHICS	89
S	SOUND	92
A	ADDICTIVENESS	75
E	EXECUTION	85

• 20 • 40 • 60 • 80 • 100

A highly coloured slash 'em up come strategy game. For expert joystick wielders only, so don't say you haven't been warned.

85



It all looks a bit overwhelming doesn't it? Believe me, it is. In case you're having trouble spotting our hero, he's wearing a red carnation.

STOP

review

GHOSTBUSTERS II

Matt Bielby's* spook-hunting skills have gone a bit wonky lately. So *Paul Lakin* ran along to hold his hand while they tackled *Ghostbusters II.



Yikes! Are they 'crims'? (Amiga screen).

New York's a spooky place at the best of times, but it just got a zillion times spookier! (ie very spooky indeed). Yes *Ghostbusters II*, the movie, is here, and it's almost the same as the first one! Luckily *Ghostbusters II*, the game, is nothing like the original as that was a thoroughly nasty 8-bit hit. Instead, *GII* is a multiload, based around three of the set piece segments of the movie, in what seems to have become the established film conversion manner.

Level One sees you dropping down an air shaft on a long string (while dodging hundreds of spectrey things). Level Two is a bit more complicated, but basically has you commandeering the Statue of Liberty(!), and steering it down Broadway towards the Museum Of Art. Here we find Level Three and your final confrontation with arch baddie Vigo. All undeniably pretty and reasonably faithful to the film, but can it hold its own as a game?



It definitely looks like curtains for our Egon. (ST screen).

WHAT'S WHAT

TITLE	Ghostbusters II
PUBLISHER	Activision
PRICE	£24.99/PC £29.99
FORMAT	ST/Amiga/PC
RELEASED	Out now



Look out Binky, Angel's at One O'clock. (*Wrong film. Ed.*) (ST screen).

ST

Paul: Who you gonna call? Disk buster. *Ghostbusters II* comes on not one... not two but *four* discs. Fast moving? Silly question really as you prepare for that sinking feeling while you're lowered into the murkey depths of a New York toilet... well sewer to be precise. The green ghoulies that spring out at you from the wall are suitably weird and lovely little movers. The same cannot be said for the Ghostbuster himself who is, if not the oldest, certainly the worst swinger in town.

A statuesque second level sees you in control of the Statue of Liberty striding towards the art museum blasting anything in sight. All good shoot 'em up fun for about 10 pico seconds. After that, despite a few exciting moments sending out sorties of citizens to collect slime, it all becomes a bit mundane.

HASSLE FACTOR: 5
Too much returning to Disc A and starting all over again.

Call me old fashioned if you like but I always thought that the last level of a game was supposed to be the best, a sort of reward for having got this far. Those young radicals at Activision must obviously disagree. They've made the last level by far the worst, perhaps in the hope that no one will ever get to it. It's New Years Eve and you're in a museum and out to rescue Dana's baby. After lowering your heroes safely to the ground (an exercise in wibbling guaranteed to take about 10 years off the life of any joystick) you're left holding the baby, so to speak. Problem is by then you don't really want it.

Ghostbusters II although not a bad game, is a lot of hassle. Ah well, the film's a load of old crap anyway.

GRAPHICS	75	ADDICTIVENESS	65	OVERALL 70
SOUND	80	EXECUTION	60	

AMIGA

Matt: Right, I've got to say this while I've got the chance, because I've been itching to for ages: just who do they really think is going to go out and pay 25 quid for a film licence? I mean the gameplay is generally thin and crippled because it's been forced to fit around a ludicrous movie storyline. (Phew. Had to get that off my chest.) Now, what about *Ghostbusters II?*

Well, it's got a flashy intro sequence. Then it's straight on to..." Please wait, loading." Hmm. Rather a lot of 'please wait, loading' in this game. How totally ludicrous and unnecessary.

As for the levels themselves, well they're...okay. The first one (unfortunately based on a sequence almost totally cut from the film) I found a bit difficult and quite hard to sustain interest in. lit looks nice and there are neat touches like the *Weird Dreams* style 'courage' meter but the directional control you have over your sprite seems very awkward.

Level Two looks interesting enough but the elements fail to gell into a proper game. It's not terrible, but equally it's no more than mildly diverting. And the third load I couldn't get to grips with at all. It took me ages to figure out that climbing down ropes should be done with a little more care, if I didn't want to kill off all my men before I even started the level.

All in all, *Ghostbusters II* is something you're more likely to take a quick peek over someone's shoulder at rather than actually splash out on, and that's not particularly Activision's fault: it's because the whole idea of 16- bit film conversions is, lets face it, a bit crap.

GRAPHICS	77	ADDICTIVENESS	61	OVERALL 69
SOUND	79	EXECUTION	70	

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- Status
- Rank
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- Reprimands

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DÉJÀ VU

Look familiar? That's 'cos these games are déjà vus, that's already 'seen' to you and of course already reviewed in ZERO on specific machines in issues past. But that's no reason to ignore the follow up versions, so here's a look at the latest batch of old (ish) games on new formats...



INDY: THE ADVENTURE GAME

Lucasfilm/£24.99 Amiga

AMIGA A

Sean: This is the second game based on the *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* movie, but this time it originates from Lucasfilm in America. Rather than the earlier arcade adventure, it's a traditional adventure game, relying more on quick wits than a fast joystick. The objective is the same: find and recover the Holy Grail before the Nazis or the Monty Python crew get their hands on it.

Fortunately, like Lucasfilm's *Maniac Mansions* reviewed last ish, there's no typing involved whatsoever. All commands are issued using a selection of options at the bottom of the screen and the mouse, which can be pointed at the animated section of the screen to choose objects. So, to speak to Marcus for example, you simply highlight the 'Speak To' at the bottom of the screen and then click the mouse over the Marcus character on the main animated screen. S'easy, innit?

Just like the ST and PC versions, *Indy: The Adventure Game* is totally fab and likely to appeal to seasoned troll bashers and non adventurers alike. I fall into the latter category myself and had a bit of trouble getting anywhere. However, the mouse-only inputting made it so easy and fast that I kept on coming back to it whereas I would've given up on a traditional adventure long before. Sound is fairly limited but superfluous anyway. The animation likewise is a bit stodgy but there is so much variety throughout the game that this can be forgiven. A great game likely to see you well into the New Year and beyond.

GRAPHICS 80 | ADDICTIVENESS 90 | SOUND 67 | EXECUTION 83 | OVERALL 87



BATMAN

Ocean/£19.99
(Amiga version reviewed in ZERO 2)

S T

Paul: Holy clichés Robin, I've barely had time to wash my Batman T-shirt and already the game of the film is out on ST! What I particularly like about this game, apart from obvious things like brill graphics and accurate movement, is the way that each level is virtually a game in itself. Obviously some of these games are better than others but even so, as a whole they're a lot better than the usual same-as-before-only-a-little-harder level changes you normally get.

One minor gripe with the control system – the similarity between firing a Batarang and Batrope. Perhaps I'm just a dodgy joystick wibbler, but I lost a lot of Batlives by shooting my Batarang when in fact I really wanted to swing myself out of a rather sticky situation. However, all in all this game is rather fab, and a hell of a lot better than the movie it's based on.

GRAPHICS 95 | ADDICTIVENESS 85 | SOUND 70 | EXECUTION 90 | OVERALL 82

WEIRD DREAMS

Electronic Arts/£24.99

AMIGA A

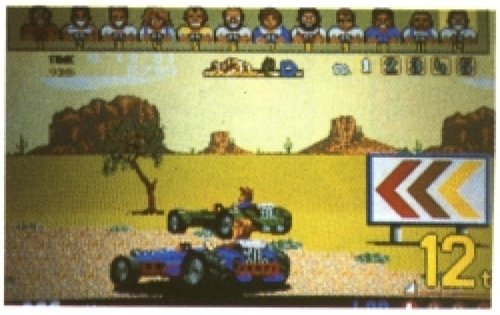
Sean: *Weird Dreams* finally arrives on the Amiga just in time for Christmas and about 50 years after the earlier ST incarnation. The scenario comes in the form of a huge novella, but I personally prefer not to wade through 60 pages of an Iain Banks rip-off before I get down to joystick juggling.

Mr. Angry impression over, let's get down to *Weird Dreams.* Basically a scrolling arcade adventure with hugely impressive graphics and sounds. Unfortunately, it's the old story of 'hunt the gameplay'. It's not even that there isn't any gameplay there, just that it's put together badly. You can get killed as you reach the end of one of the screens, before it flips onto the next screen. Some of the sections are also extremely difficult and incredibly awkward.

All in all, *Weird Dreams* comprises of stunning graphics, vivid imagination and very little gameplay. Such is life.

GRAPHICS 90 | ADDICTIVENESS 40 | SOUND 80 | EXECUTION 60 | OVERALL 67





POWERDRIFT

Activision/£24.99
(Amiga version reviewed In ZERO 2)

S T

Dunc: *Powerdrift* on the ST is graphically fab. But it lacks one thing – gameplay. So much time has been spent trying to cram in everything from the coin-op, that this important little element appears to have been completely forgotten. As a result, the track jerks towards you in such a way as to make things confusing. A particularly sharp oncoming right-hand bend (for instance) can't really be made out until you hit it, whereupon it's a question of luck as to whether or not your joystick is being held in the right position to get you round before crashing. Completing tracks, especially the later ones, is more a test of memory than driving skills.

At the end of the day, *Powerdrift* (the ST conversion) seemed to be an exercise in emulating the 'prowess' of the arcade machine rather than an attempt to re-create the gameplay.

GRAPHICS 90 | ADDICTIVENESS 40 | SOUND 85 | EXECUTION 85 | OVERALL 75

STOP



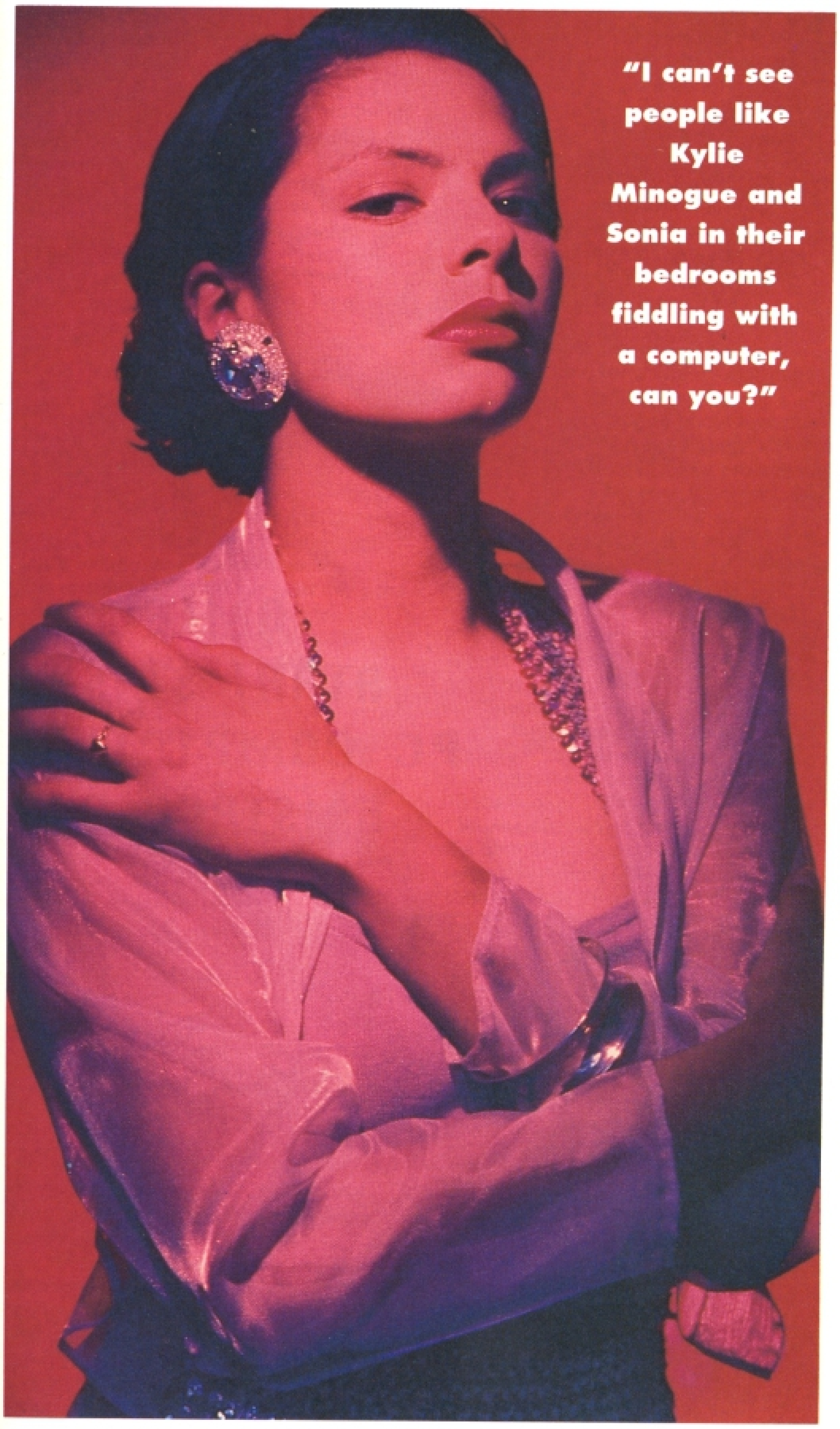
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***Tim Ponting* puts a baseball cap on back to front (he's funny like that) and wanders over to Rhythm King records to chat to Betty Boo, one of the UK's hottest new rappers – now a solo artist in her own right – and Andy Lovegrove, her engineer/producer extraordinaire.**



Yah Boo sucks to the Grebos! Get off your Yamaha 125 and drink your Ribena! Betty Boo has hit town, fresh from her success as a vocalist on the Beatmasters' *Hey DJ*.

Betty Boo (Alison to her mother) has launched herself into a career as a solo artist, writing, arranging and pre-producing her own songs. Like Debbie Harry, she's cast off her past and is treading her way through the minefield of the music business. Unlike Debbie Harry, she's 19. She first came to public attention with female rap outfit Hvs Gvs Fcqysfg A=0 (answers on a postcard).

"I was about 17, at sixth form doing my "A" levels. I suppose I just rebelled against everyone really – nobody at my school liked rap music at all, just rock and stuff. They used to come in their black leather jackets and I thought, 'I'm not like you'. Me and a friend got together and started rapping. At the time, there weren't that many female rappers around so we easily got a record company interested in us."

Now she's working towards musical self-sufficiency, setting up a home studio and learning the technical tricks of the trade. Which of course, is where the computer enters the picture.

"Set up at home I've got a four track tape machine, an Akai S590 sampler, a Yamaha ZX11 keyboard (you can win your very own in our compo on page 67) and an Atari ST running a sequencing package," she explains.

TECHNO MAN

This is where Andy Lovegrove enters the picture – her technical main man who helped put everything together in the first place.

"The system's based around the Atari ST 1040, running Steinberg's Pro 24 sequencing software," he elaborates. Wait for it – any minute now, he'll quote the software version.

"I'm a Pro 24 Version 3 man."

Told you, these engineer types are always the same.

"Pro 24 is like the industry standard because it's the most logical system. Graphically, you're editing with your eyes as well as your ears which makes a hell of a difference. You can get as specific as you want to, get down into the tiniest details, if need be."

Andy is presently working with a


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PRODUCTIONS

wide variety of artists within the dance field, ranging from Silver Bullet to Lee Bennet of Faze One.

"I'm an artist in my own right as well, but I'm not allowed to talk about that because this is Alison's interview."

"Go on, I don't mind," she insists.

Andy fails to be drawn into the subject. What a gent.

"I mainly do production and pre-production stuff. Generally everybody I work with comes down to my own studio. It's a good vibe, ennit Alison?"

"Yeah, it's down in his cellar."

Working with computers attracts both of the people talking to me in the sumptuous Rhythm King interview suite, also known as the kitchen. For Andy it's a means of simplifying his extensive studio work. For Betty, it's a ticket to self-sufficiency.

"I decided to do everything myself. The computer will allow me to do this."

So now you don't really need anyone else's help?

"Hey! Wait....," pipes up Andy.

"Well, I feel it's good to be able to express yourself and not to have to translate it through anyone else," she explains. "I like to work on my own ... most of the time... no offence Andy..."

"None taken."

It sounds to me like Andy's going to be out of a job rather soon...

"I don't just work for Alison," he points out. "I'm glad she's doing it. because the thing I like about Alison is that she's shown a lot of interest in how it's put together, rather than just being an 'artist'. So many people are content to just sit back and say 'I'll do the rap.' She's willing, she wants to learn and that enables her to do her own thing the way she wants. I think that's vital."

An engineer with liberated attitudes – a rare bird if there ever was one.

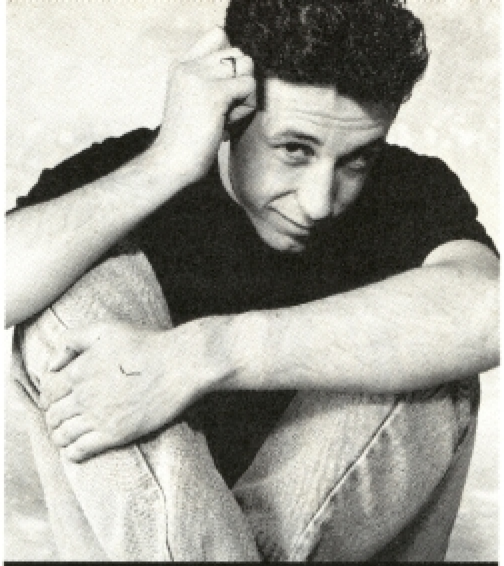
OLD FOGEY

"I wouldn't work with her if she didn't have that attitude. A lot of people are just stealing too much off other records. But Alison writes good melodies. It seems old fashioned to say this but to me, the most important thing has to be the attitude of the artist and whether they can actually write a song. Because a good song should stand up on its own. Technology aside, you should be able to sit and sing a song without any accompaniment – the melody in other words. If you can do that, then you can do whatever you want underneath it. There are a lot of people around who don't do that. There's a lot of dross."

The half finished Betty Boo album is proof that a recording unit in a bedroom can generate a highly sophisticated end product. I want to know whether the 'back bedroom studio' represents the future of recording.

"I can't really see people like Kylie Minogue and Sonia in their bedrooms, surrounded by pink fluffy dolls and things, fiddling with a computer, can you?" says Alison.

"I think it's going that way," Andy suggests. "Technology has got to the stage where it's very accessible, whereas five years ago it wasn't. It used to take a substantial amount of money to put a system together which could produce good demos. Nowadays, because software's so much cheaper to produce and because sampling's so much better and cheaper, there's going to be a lot more people producing their own stuff. Young kids can just go and do it now. You need less than a £1000 to produce a nice little writing unit. And even then, you're only spending £700 or £800 for an Atari and its software. And maybe a grand for a keyboard with drum sounds and everything else you need. So you're talking about less than £2000 for a really good writing facility which would transfer into a professional studio as well – because you just take your disk in with you."



ANDY LOVEGROVE: "I've got some whacky samples but I couldn't tell you what they are... they're disgusting."

Do you feel that rap is where technology is being stretched?

"In popular music, definitely."

"I think the rap artists are exploring all the different facilities of their equipment, trying to produce new sounds," adds Alison.

So where is dance music going?

"I think it's definitely getting more popular," says Andy.

"It seems to be taking over the Top 10 these day," Alison points out. "Because nobody's going to dance to the Beautiful South, are they?" She laughs nervously. "I keep forgetting I shouldn't say things like that, there's a tape recorder going!"

BETTY BOO: "Dance music is taking over – because nobody's going to dance to The Beautiful South, are they?"



Ooops, a bit of a Boo-Boo there. Time to change the subject. As a sampler hack myself, I'm always after tales of the unexpected – sample-wise that is. Andy has a gleam in his eye.

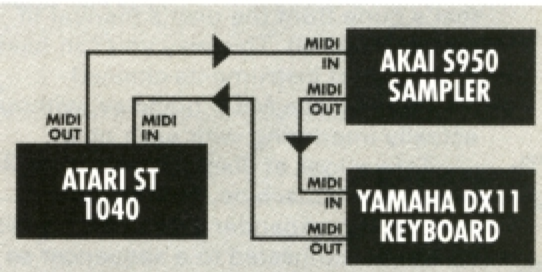
"No, it's nothing, really. Well I've got some wacky samples but you wouldn't want to put them in an article."

Nah, don't believe you.

PIG PORN

"Alright then – the keyboard player in my band came up with this sample... It actually came from Courtney Pine who he plays keyboards with. I'd better not say that, after I tell you what it's about!" It's a while before he can squeeze a few more words between the gushes of laughter. "It's off some porn movie but it involves pigs and things. That's all I'm going to say. It's disgusting."

After the hysterics have died down, he continues in a more serious vein: "The sound of the front door to my house being opened ended up at the beginning of one of the Betty Boo tracks. But it works: you only have to have a bit of imagination and you can use any sound you like – that's what's so good about it. With the S900, S950 and S1000, the potential for editing is so good, that you can distort a sound in just about any way you want to."



Betty Boo's MIDI set up: "It's just chain linked, as you explained in your November issue."

What do you think of the sampling software packages available for the machines which ZERO covers?

"I can't really say not having used any. The only problem is, for a sequencing/sampling system you'd need two computers. Because once you've dedicated your computer to sampling, you've got to get an external sequencer. You can't run two programs simultaneously like you can with an Amiga or machine like that. So therefore you need two computers, one as a sequencer and one as a sampler."

Even so, it's quite an encouraging thought for all you musos out there slaving over a hot MIDI interface, that writing your own hit single might not be as expensive as you think. Your humble 16-bit machine could hold the key to a career in the world's most glamorous industry. Take a tip from Andy Lovegrove: "With the minimum amount of technology, if you apply yourself properly and you know what you're doing, as long as you're careful and meticulous, you can achieve a lot by planning ahead. Just exercise a bit of savvy and you can go a long way..."

MUSIC LESSONS

MIDI MAYHEM

It's time for *Tim Pirelli* to get on down for another helping of MIDI music.

Over the last two issues of ZERO we've already looked at a few of the basic uses of the MIDI system. So I reckon it's about time to examine in a little more detail how the system actually works.

The first thing to realise is that MIDI is a one-way system (if you've ever tried to drive through central London you'll know all about them). This means that to get two MIDI instruments to talk to each other you have to plug in two MIDI leads – one for each direction you want to send information (see diagram 1).

The second thing to realise is that MIDI will handle not one, but 16 channels of information. The best way to explain this is to compare it to a television with 16 channels instead of just four. Even though the programmes for BBC1, BBC 2, ITV and Channel 4 are all being transmitted at the same time, your TV set only shows you one at a time (unless you've picked up a cheap Russian import). You simply tune your TV set to whichever channel you want to watch. In a similar way you 'tune' your MIDI devices to one of MIDI's 16 channels – you'll find out exactly how that's done from the user's manual (if you can find it!). This way you can have a number of instruments chained together on one MIDI 'highway' without actually interfering with each other.

Take a look at diagram two. It shows how a drum machine, a synthesizer, a sampler, an expander and a reverb unit can all be connected to a sequencer so that they will work together. If each one is given a separate MIDI channel, they can all be made to work without upsetting each other – say we give the drum machine channel one, the synth channel two, the sampler channel three, the expander channel four and the reverb unit channel five. The MIDI information is passed on from instrument to instrument using the MIDI Thru sockets. This way each instrument can read information intended for it (i.e. informaton on the channel it's tuned to) and ignore everything else.

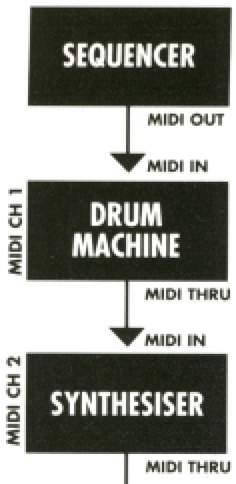


DIAGRAM 1

To make sure that each instrument only responds to the information you want it to, you'll have to make sure that you've set each of them to 'Omni Off' (again, you'll find how to do this in the manual). If any of the instruments are set to 'Omni On' they will respond to ALL the data sent along the MIDI highway. Omni On is a setting used just to make it easy to plug one instrument into another and know that it's going to work, but it doesn't have much use in more exciting MIDI set-ups.

So having got all our gear properly set up, we can then play a piece of music from the sequencer and each of the instruments will play its part. For example, the drum machine will play the drum parts, the synth will play the bass line, the sampler will play a horn section and the expander will play synthesized strings. The reverb won't actually play anything, but we can use MIDI to change its settings at various points in the music. (We'll look at this more closely later in the series).

This is fine as far as it goes but we haven't made any arrangements for getting music INTO the sequencer. To do this you need to connect the MIDI Out of an instrument to the MIDI In of the sequencer and play something in (see diagram 3). In our example set-up, the best "master" instrument is the synthesizer because it has a keyboard on it. The synth can be used to record any of the parts – including the drums – because we can assign the recorded information to the track that instrument is tuned to. So we record the string chords that we want the expander to play and then assign that musical part to MIDI channel. The brass part can be recorded and assigned to channel three and so on, until the whole recording is complete. Again, to find out how it's done, consult the sequencer's manual.

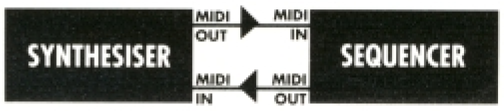


DIAGRAM 3

But what about the drums? How do we record drum parts with a keyboard? Well, we use MIDI Note Numbers just the same as for all the other parts. The sounds in the drum machines are samples (digital recordings) of real drums, so the drum machine is actually a sort of dedicated sampler with each of its sounds set to a MIDI note. All it knows, is that it's got some sounds that you want to hear and if you send it the right notes, it'll play them for you.

Along with the MIDI note information (Note On, Velocity, Note Off) the sequencer will record a great many other kinds of information – and as long as the instruments you are using are equipped to handle it, this can become part of your music. We're talking about such things as pitchbend, modulation (for vibrato and tremolo) and aftertouch (for altering some aspect of the sound, such as volume, after it's been played) – which all go to make up the sort of performance you'd get from a human being. These are called MIDI performance events.

Be very careful though, as not all MIDI-equipped instruments are able to generate and respond to all the available performance events. This may be to help keep the cost of an instrument down or it may be because it's old and the MIDI system is constantly being developed.

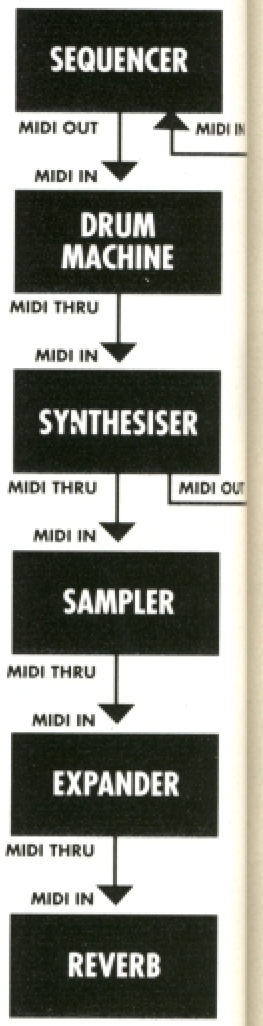
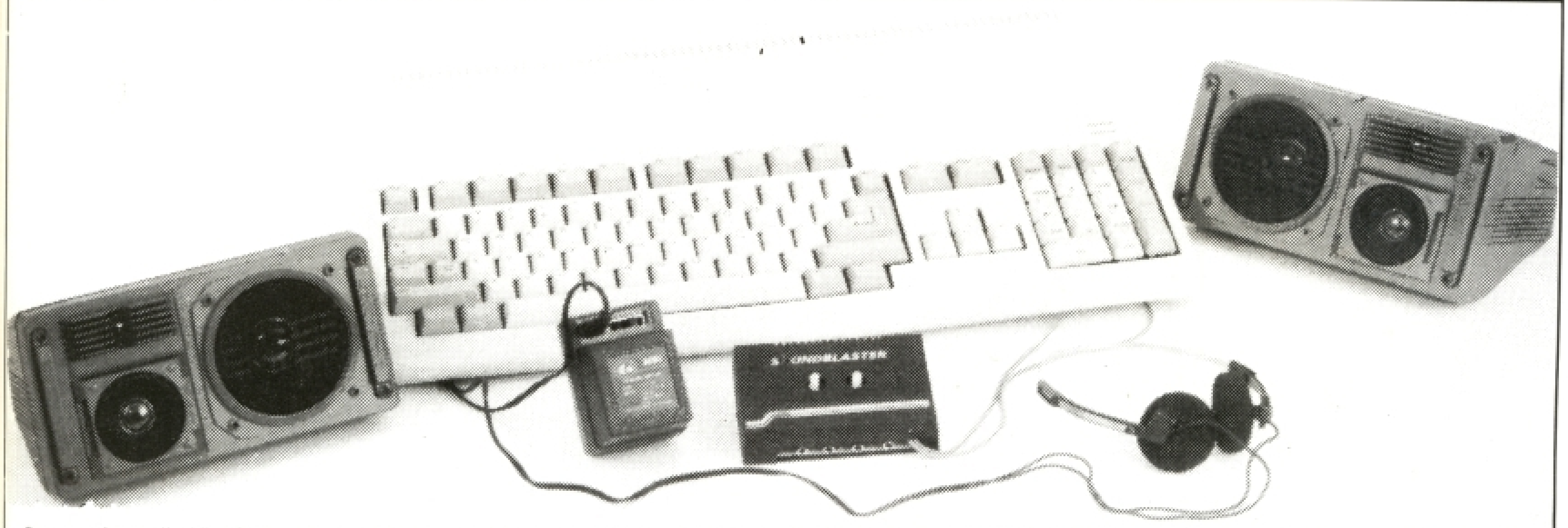


DIAGRAM 2

Once our music has been recorded, we can store it in the sequencer for another day. If you're using a computer, this will always be done onto disk but hardware sequencers sometimes use data cassettes (if they're old enough). Either way, this means that we can go back to a song we've been working on to change it or maybe just to finish it. Where using MIDI to do this really scores over tape recordings is that we don't have to start all over again – we can change the strings sounds we were using for wild synthesizer sounds, the sampled brass for samples of breaking bottles or the drum sounds for Latin percussion. We can even change instruments without losing all the work we've put into recording the music. It's also possible to add new instrumental parts, take exisiting ones away and change the structure of the music – because it's all just data in a computer.

What we've been talking about here is MIDI System Common Information And Real Time Recording. MIDI also uses what's called System Exclusive information and allows to record music a step at a time – step-time recording. System Exclusive is one area where MIDI becomes very complicated and very powerful (especially if you're writing your own software) but one of the uses of step-time recording is that it lets us build up pieces of music without having to be able to play very well. We'll be looking at both in due course and next month we'll dive into editing the music we've recorded. This is yet another way MIDI lets those of us with mere two-finger playing technique sound like proper musicians. Cripes! STOP

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Everyone knows that the Amiga has the best sound capabilities available on any popular computer today. Unfortunately, until now, unless you could connect your Amiga to your stereo system you could not fully appreciate the quality of the sound.

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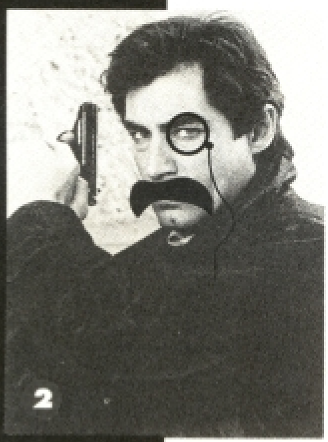
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Pssst. Listen closely. We will say this only once. *The Third Courier* from Accolade, a scintillating new spy game, will land tonight. So get out your bugs, (*Bleuuurgh! Ed.*), tape recorders and false moustaches and prepare to embark upon some cunning 'spy' capers.

In *The Third Courier* you play Moondancer, master spy. Your mission is to recover some stolen NATO defence plans. Two of the three couriers who were handcuffed to the plans now lie on marble slabs in the morgue. And it's your job to nip over to Berlin to find The Third Courier.


1


2


3

I SPY

A master spy needs the right 'equipment' though. And what more 'useful' piece of equipment could a spy have than a 'Super Zoom' camera – they're très handy for photographing mean looking hoodlums from a very safe distance. And it just so happens that those generous people at Accolade have an Olympus AZ-300 Super Zoom 35mm Compact Camera up for grabs for the first prize winner of this compo. It comes complete with auto focus, auto load and tons of other brilliant features to boot. Ten runners up won't be disappointed either. They'll each win a pure cotton Accolade baseball hat – very useful for blending in to do a bit of espionage at baseball matches.

SPYING TONIGHT

But what have you got to do to win these essential pieces of spying 'kit'? S'easy. Simply take a look at the three famous spies above. They've each been 'cunningly disguised' and we want you to identify them. For example, if you think that Picture One is that 'spy of all spies' James (007) Bond, then write James Bond next to Picture One on the coupon and so on. When you've sussed out all three, cut out the coupon and send it to **All Will Be Revealed Compo, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London, W1P 1DE.** And make sure your entries reach us by January 31st 1990.

I should be working for MI5, I sussed the real faces behind these cunning disguises in... ooh... um... seconds.

Picture One is ____________________

Picture Two is ____________________

Picture Three is ____________________

NAME ____________________

ADDRESS ____________________

____

____________________ **'ZIP' CODE** ____________________

RULES

- All agents of Accolade and Dennis Oneshots will be deported if they try to enter this compo.
- Get those entries in by January 31st 1990 or it'll be a piano wire tie for you chummo.
- The Ed's decision is final.

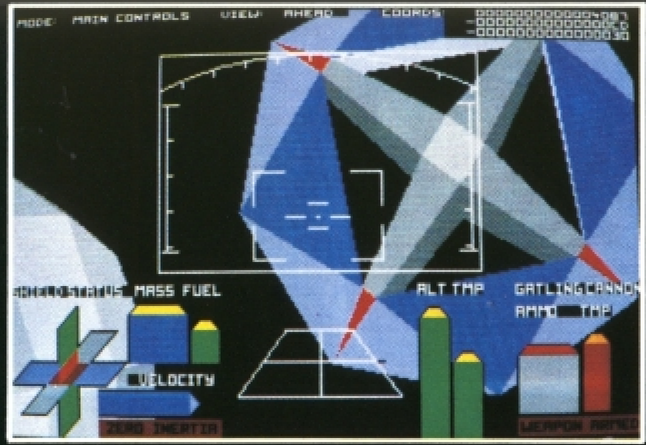
DOMINION

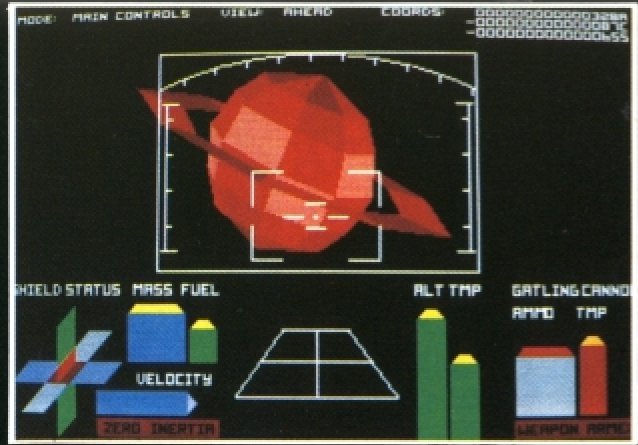
'A sophisticated space simulation based on our own solar system in the year 2100'

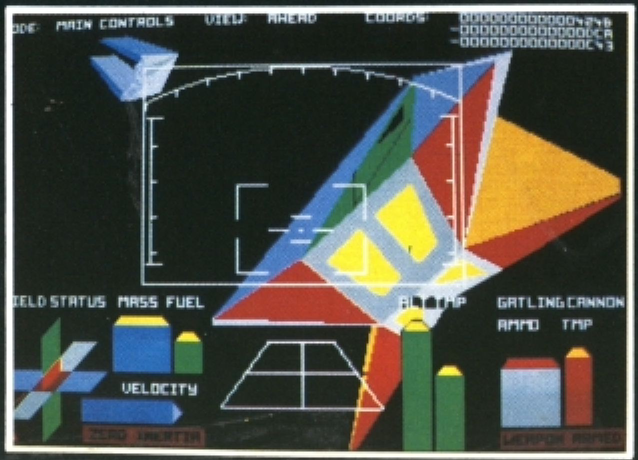
The year is 2100, nearly ten years since the Multinationals took effective control of the governments of earth and the carve-up of land and resources between them began. Then came news of a new invention, the Mass Stabilizer, an incredible piece of equipment which effectively neutralises the mass of an object. The consequences of this invention were far reaching, anti-gravity and faster than light travel and communications being among the most important.

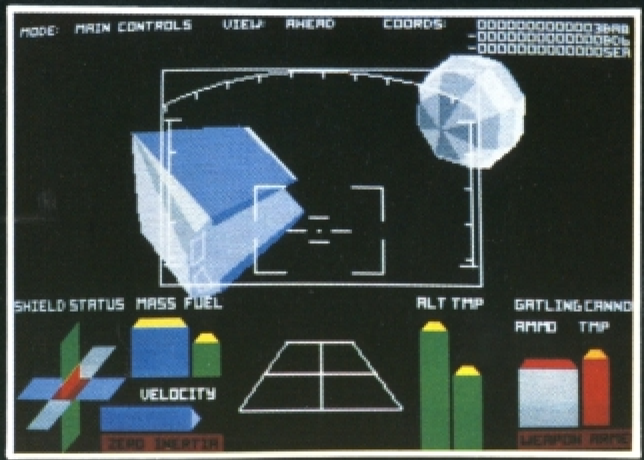
Suddenly the exploitation of the solar system became a viable proposition, taking the Multinationals completely by surprise. The more enterprising of the small companies and wealthy entrepreneurs were quick to seize the opportunity and were first into space. However, the Multinationals were quick to recover and poured huge resources into the development of space hardware.

The carve-up of the solar system had begun ...









Screen shots from Atari ST version.

FEATURES

1. *MONO or COLOUR.*
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3. *Up to **eight** ST/AMIGA/PC computers may be connected together using a combination of MIDI and RS232 ports for the multiplayer option.*
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SHORTS

With only nine shopping days left till Christmas and more new games on the market than you can shake a stick at, ZERO brings you a 'Shorts' review section. We've crammed in everything possible and we think you'll agree it's a bit of a whoppa. So in the 'immortal' words of Geoffrey (the voice-over on *Blind Date*) 'the choice is yours... '

ASTERIX AND THE MAGIC STONE

Coktel Vision/ST, Amiga & PC £24.99

ST

Paul: Following the success of *Tintin*, it's no great surprise to see yet another cartoon hero make the leap onto the 16-bit. Asterix is the latest 'toon' to arrive on our screens. Unfortunately though, he doesn't quite deliver the goods.

Asterix And The Magic Stone is an arcade adventure/collect 'em up based on a mish mash of about three *Asterix* stories. Getafix has been bashed on the bonce by Obelix's menhir and forgotten the formula for the magic potion. (Let's face it, it would be a pretty quick game if the Gauls had their full quota of medieval Lucozade.) Asterix must collect the ingredients, mix the potion and then test it whilst fending off Romans, wild boars, a soothsayer and even some flying fish.

Graphically the game is a great success. The characters and backdrops are all really accurate and there are some very neat touches, like when you jump a wild boar and it turns into a sizzling roast and whenever Asterix is hit by a Roman or receives a slap from a flying fish, he drums his foot in rage.

Without the graphics however, the game has little to it. Animation of characters is on the jerky side and the screens take a dark age to change. The game plays reasonably well but, like



eating jellied eels – you only want to do it once. Frightening Romans by pointing in the air gets a trifle dull after a while and ducking fish gets downright irritating by Toutatis!

At the end of the day, *Asterix And The Magic Stone* is a collection of nice graphics looking for a game. Hopefully one day they'll find one one.

GRAPHICS 78 ADDICTIVENESS 60
SOUND 60 EXECUTION 62
OVERALL 65

MINDBENDER

Gremlin/ST & Amiga £19.99

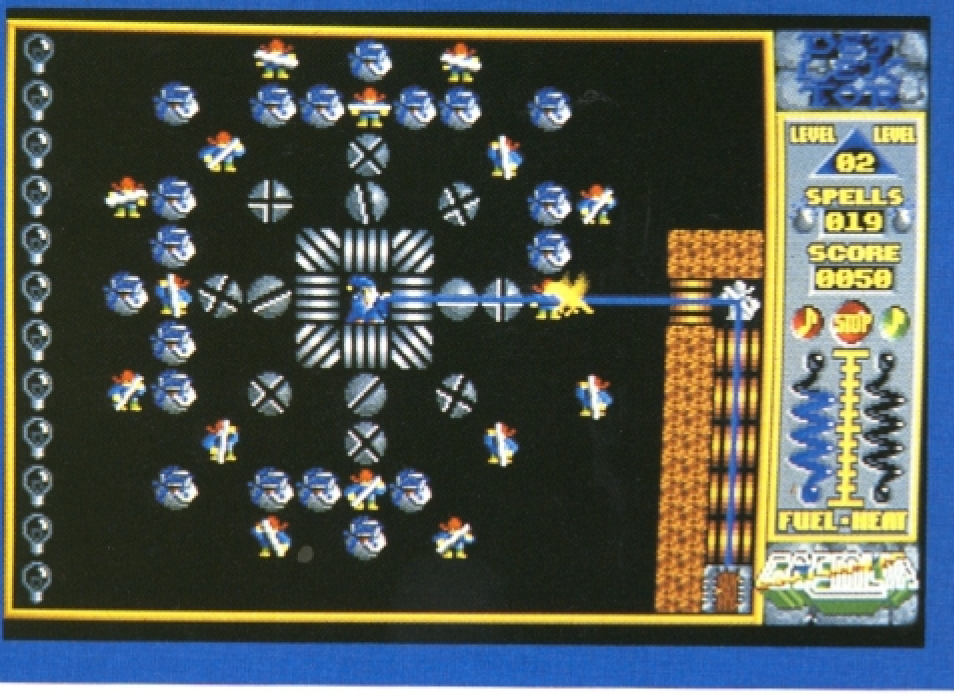
AMIGA

Sean: *Mindbender* is one of those strange games that is practically impossible to pigeon hole. Unless you have one labelled 'bendy beams and mirrors with a magician' games, 'cos that's exactly what *Mindbender* is.

The object of this game is to bounce the wizard's 'magic beam' (a bit like a laser) around the screen, destroying just about everything it comes into contact with before guiding it into a keyhole to give access to the next level. The beam is directed by making it rebound off mirrors which are positioned round the screen and can be manipulated to bounce the beam in various directions. There are also fixed prisms and mirrors which tend to make getting the beam where you want it, a little more difficult. It's all mouse controlled, and changing the angle of the mirror is done by placing the pointer over the mirror and clicking it until the beam is reflected at the angle you want.

To begin with the screens are fairly straightforward, and serve more as a gentle guide to what to do rather than actually taxing your grey matter. As you progress however, the puzzles get more and more difficult and become practically impossible round about level 13. There are 50 levels included but if your'e the brainy type who solves these fairly quickly, there's a really nifty screen creator and editor.

After sussing everything out, I found that *Mindbender* is a really entertaining puzzle game,which tests both your speedy reactions and your brain. Surprisingly enough, it's fairly easy to get to grips with, but solving some of the more awkward screens had me almost pulling my hair out. The sound is loud and chunky with some brilliant samples, for example you hear a loud scream when you accidentally hit the wizard. The graphics are rather small but perfectly detailed.



However, I did begin to get a little bored after a few hours play but I expect that there will be many people, disenchanted with the usual type of games available, who will love *Mindbender* so much they will want to have its babies. This one's definitely destined for cult status.

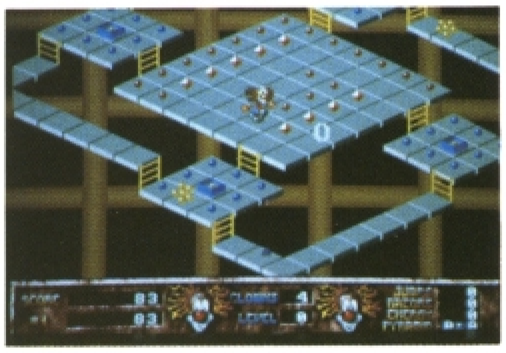
GRAPHICS 85 ADDICTIVENESS 73
SOUND 80 EXECUTION 78
OVERALL 81

CLOWN O MANIA

Starbyte/ST & Amiga £19.99

Jonathan: The plot: Beppo is a clown, and one day, while he's wandering around the circus, he finds a map which shows the way to a land full of valuable crystals. Ahem. Well here's a game that reminds me of an old one called *Crystal Castles* or something. It's a kind of 3D *Pacman* but with a lot more to it.

The crystals Beppo is interested in are spread around 70 different screens.



These are multi-level 3D affairs, with the levels linked by stairs, ramps and teleporters. Needless to say, the crystals are guarded by countless baddies. These generally move in fixed paths so they can be avoided with a little cunning. If you're feeling particularly inventive, you could even try dropping little pyramids in their paths. These will either divert them or wipe them all out.

Clown O Mania is very slickly presented, with graphics and sound being well up to scratch. Plenty of imagination seems to have gone into setting out the screens. Although you'll zip through the first few in no time, no doubt impressing any onlookers in the process, they soon toughen up.

A chart-topper it won't be, but that's about the nastiest thing I can think of to say about it, 'cos it's well good.

GRAPHICS 79 ADDICTIVENESS 75
SOUND 87 EXECUTION 85
OVERALL 82

COMMANDO

Elite/ST & Amiga £19.99

Dunc: Well here's an old chestnut. *Commando* was being played to death on the Spectrum and C64 back in the days when my pet hen, Derek, was still an egg. (Derek's nearly three now, if you're interested).

Anyway, hens apart it's quite simply a viewed-from- above vertically scrolling shoot 'em up with no knobs attatched (well, hardly any). At the start of the game you're dropped onto the desert landscape by helicopter. Your little sprite seems to wave goodbye to somebody off-screen and then the helicopter buggers off.

You're armed with a machine gun with unlimited ammo and a finite stock of grenades (which can be replenished by picking up the numerous grenade boxes that litter your route). Run forwards and shoot absolutely everybody you can, while dodging the oncoming barrage. At first there are just roaming foot soldiers to contend with, but as you progress through the game, you'll encounter soldiers behind sandbags, soldiers on overhead bridges, soldiers in trenches, soldiers manning cannons and soldiers pootling about in little red pedal cars. *(Are you sure about that last one? Ed.)*

To say the game gets hectic would be an understatement – what we have here is pure unadulterated machine-gunning, bomb-throwing violence. It's all tremendous fun in the gameplay stakes, apart from one thing: the collision detection. Due to the 'overhead and behind' viewpoint you feel as if you're just about safe from being touched by things when, in reality, you aren't. So you die. This collision routine is consistantly inaccurate however, so you do get used to it fairly quickly. What about the graphics? Erm, well, as I



said – *Commando* is an old, old game. And this conversion is a pretty accurate rendition, visually speaking. So, what that basically means is that the graphics are, er, a little bit crap actually. And the sound? Well, there's a rat-a-tat-tat noise as lead spews from your gun and a sort of muffled boom for the genade explosions but that's about it.
And the playability? There's bags of it!

Commando is still a load of fun to play but it's pretty basic. I think maybe this should have been a budget game. I'll just ask my hen Derek what he thinks of it. Oh dear, Bernard Matthews has taken him away.

ST

GRAPHICS 68 ADDICTIVENESS 83
SOUND 58 EXECUTION 70
OVERALL 67

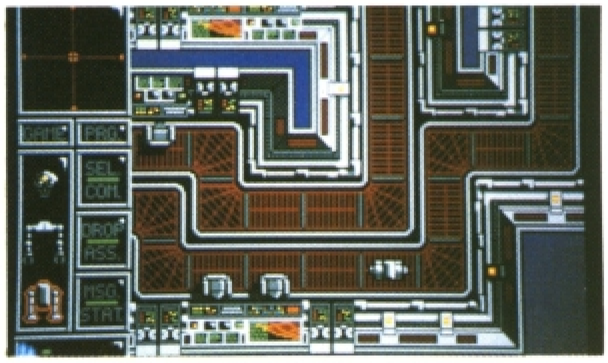
AMIGA

GRAPHICS 73 ADDICTIVENESS 84
SOUND 70 EXECUTION 70
OVERALL 79

FIRST CONTACT

Rainbird/ST £24.99/ Amiga Out Soon

Rich: Don't let the 38 page manual put you off 'cos once you've read (and understood) it, you'll be in for a corker of a game!
I won't bore you with the hefty plot but here's a brief resumé... You control a droid – made up of a head, an arm unit and a leg unit which can move



independently, or join up together in two or three parts. You manoeuvre your droid through a massive space station, trying to forcibly eject some alien gate crashers. Each one can be moved in turn via the joystick (or keyboard), and be programmed to move to a certain location by writing a program within the game. This enables you to have all of the droids moving simultaneously.

This game works with a flip-screen view with an icon system to the left, which helps you do things such as program the droids and combine them. The graphics are ace – very colourful and fast, with great animation and smooth movement as your droids waddle or hop across the decks. Sound is good too and it's utterly addictive. Yup, I sure lurve it. Now please excuse me 'cos I've got a world to save...

GRAPHICS 86 ADDICTIVENESS 89
SOUND 77 EXECUTION 92
OVERALL 87

GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

US Gold/ST & Amiga £19.99

Dunc: Yo ho! It's the latest Capcom coin-op conversion, from the people who brought *Bionic Commando* to the 16-bits. You play King Arthur and you've got to rescue someone who's been imprisoned. But where is this blackguard being held? Only in the very bowels of Hell itself.



There are four giant levels (which scroll both vertically and horizontally) to get through before reaching Hell itself. First the graveyard level, populated by grim-reapers and vultures, which gives way to a hellish 'hill' setting. There's a ghost town level with bouncing skulls and mutant flies. There's a nightmarish 'uppy' scroller bit as you're transported skywards in a giant spooky elevator, which takes you through a host of vicious knights and statues – and leads you into a horizontal trek across some giant retracting tongues. Then it's 'downies' again, as you slip and slide, Hellward bound, down a series of gungy tree trunks. If you survive these nightmares and the end of level nasties, you'll find there's worse to come once you confront the Lord Of Evil himself at the end of level five. Hopefully you'll have picked up enough weaponry along the way. If you haven't then you're going to die rather quickly.

So there we have it. *Ghouls 'N' Ghosts* is a rather a nice looking game with a very large play area. The going is extremely tough so it's debatable whether many people are going to see much of the later scenery without a POKE or two. Still, lot's of games are like that, so who can complain?

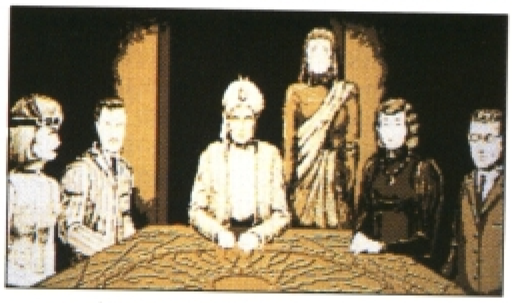
GRAPHICS 80 ADDICTIVENESS 70 SOUND 75 EXECUTION 80 OVERALL 77

THE HOUND OF SHADOW

Electronic Arts/ST £24.99/ Amiga & PC Out Soon

Mike: *The Hound Of Shadow* combines RPG with gothic horror in a game based on the macabre stories of HP Lovecraft. It's got a fashionable click-on-the-icons front-end, but the, erm, back-end is old-fashioned text adventure.

The game begins when you attend a



seance in 1920s London where one of the people is told: "The Hound of Shadow is upon you, and you bear his mark." To find out what the devil's going on and stop it, you snoop around the British Museum Reading Room and an occult bookshop. Then it's off to East Anglia where you continue to delve into doings relating to mysterious, black dogs and Vlad the Impaler.

Each time you play, you can load in a previously created character or create a new one. The way you build up your character, creates an involvement like no previous ST RPG game has done. Shame the game itself's just a plain old adventure that could have been written on an 8-bit machine. The early stages are pure page-turning. If it had better parsing and less of a feel that you're reading a book, then you'd be talking...

GRAPHICS 85 ADDICTIVENESS 65 SOUND 0 EXECUTION 55 OVERALL 75

MOONWALKER

US Gold/ST & Amiga £24.99

Sean: Whacko Jacko, man of plastic, returns in yet another incarnation.This time it's in the form of *Moonwalker: The Computer Game*, which is based on several incidents from the movie.

Following the usual film-tie in trend, several of the film's incidents are converted into four mini games. The first and second levels being 'dodge the enemies' and 'collect the goodies' games, the third and fourth being two more *Operation Wolf* variations to add

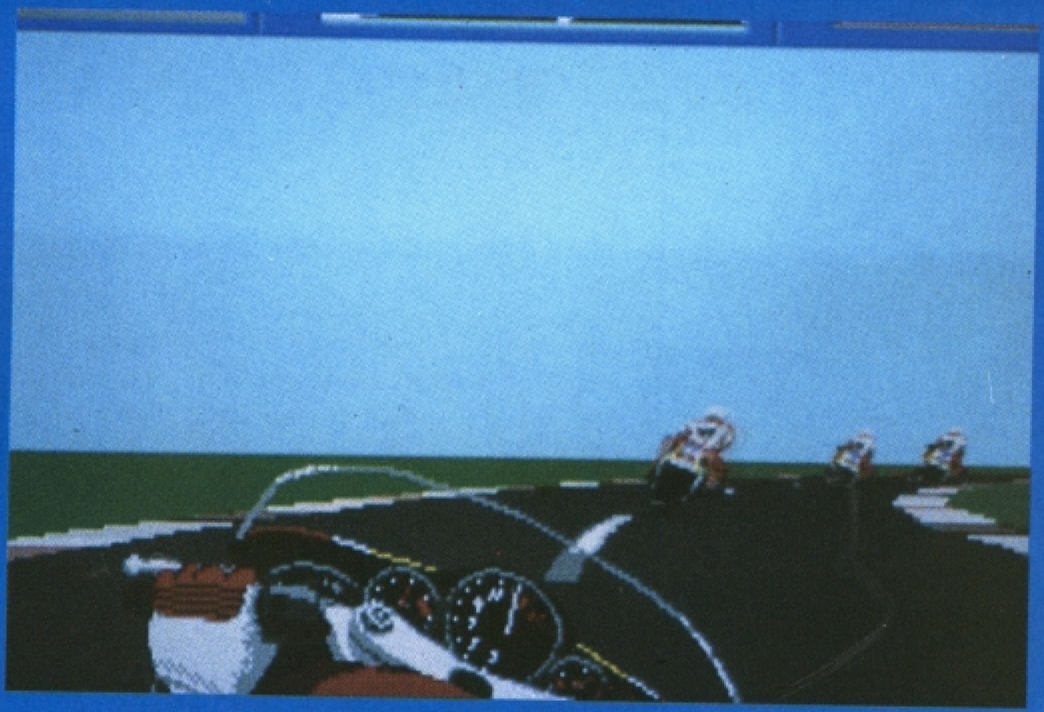
THE CYCLES

Accolade/PC £24.99, ST & Amiga coming soon

Sean: ***The Cycles: International Grand Prix Racing*** **gives you the chance to drive some of the fastest bikes available, around all the great circuits of the world against some extremely stiff opposition. Choose one of five skill levels and whether you want to just be timed, take part in a single race or a whole championship circuit of 15 races.**

Cycles **is incredibly addictive and the attention to detail is impressive. For instance, you actually feel as though you're riding round the circuit as your bike tilts and your view rises and falls, as you climb and descend hills. The background changes for each track while the graphics are particularly realistic in EGA. The only let down is the tinny sound, but as you need to listen to the revs for gear changing, you can't really turn it off. Still, even this is not enough to spoil one of the best motorcycle sims to date.**

GRAPHICS 81 ADDICTIVENESS 87 SOUND 75 EXECUTION 82 OVERALL 86



WIN WIN WIN!

10 *Cycles* T-Shirts.

Tell us what motor cycle Marlon Brando rode in *The Wild Ones* and a *Cycles* T-Shirt could be yours. Send your answers on the back of a postcard to Could I Wheelie Win A T-shirt? Compo, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE. Entries must be in by January 31st 1990. Normal compo rules apply. The Editor's decision is final.

SUPER WONDER BOY

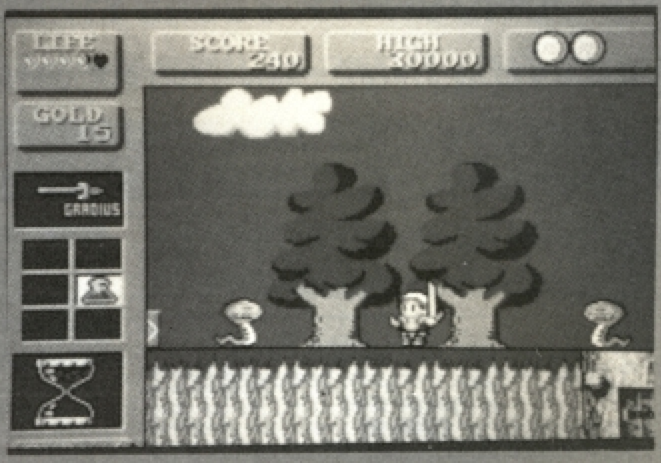
Activision/ST & Amiga £24.99

Dunc: It's Japanese cutesy-wutesy time again. You control a horrible little 'goody goody' sprite who's out to destroy a particularly vicious dragon. Let's hope the dragon doesn't cotton onto the fact that *Super Wonder Boy,* (underneath the armour he collects at the beginning of the game) is in fact wearing a nappy.

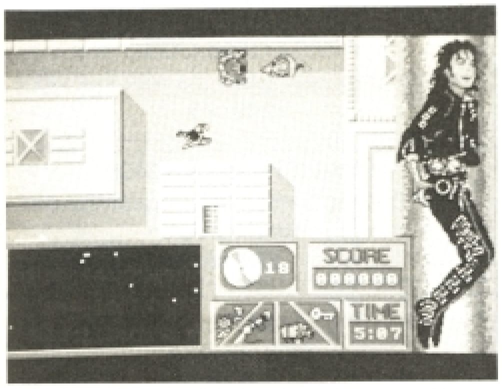
Super Wonder Boy is a gigantic four way scrolling side on viewed, shoot 'em-up/quest game. The brightly coloured pathways and platforms are populated by lots of roving cartoony monsters and by doors into buildings, which lead mostly into shops where pieces of add-on 'kit' can be purchased. Some doors take you into the 'doctor's' where full health can be regained for a price, while others lead into the lairs of the 'end of level guardians'. Oh and a few will give you some useless advice.

Super Wonder Boy is actually rather a brilliant little game. It's very easy to get into and very hard to put down. You're supplied with enough energy to allow you to get pretty far into the game – even on your first go. I wish there was some kind of 'save' device though – having to repeat the same actions for over half an hour or so, just to get back to where you were last killed, can get a little bit boring. (Yawn). Still, if you're especially fond of games of this ilk, then *Super Wonder Boy* really is a must and even if you're not, I think it might prove a bit of an eye opener.

GRAPHICS 78 ADDICTIVENESS 88 SOUND 75 EXECUTION 78 OVERALL 85







to the growing piles.

There are some good demo-style sequences but these don't enhance the actual gameplay in any way. xThe graphics aren't outstanding; the sound on the Amiga version includes catchy samples from *Bad,* and the ST has tunes mangled through the internal soundchip which sound horrible.

The trouble is that whilst I am sure that *Moonwalker* will be a great success on the 8-bit formats, it's just not a 16-bit game. The third level, set in the Club 30s, is the best of the lot, as it's fairly addictive. In the other three, there's not really enough to do and the boredom factor creeps in. Highly polished and well programmed but ultimately boring.

ST

GRAPHICS 76 ADDICTIVENESS 70 SOUND 70 EXECUTION 76 OVERALL 68

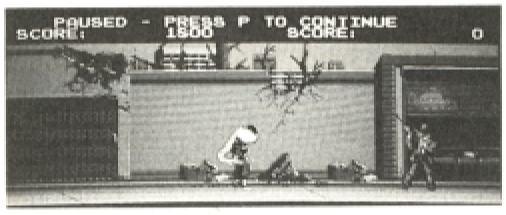
AMIGA

GRAPHICS 76 ADDICTIVENESS 70 SOUND 80 EXECUTION 79 OVERALL 71

NINJA WARRIORS

Virgin Mastertronic/ST & Amiga £19.99

Paul: *Ninja Warriors* is a beat 'em up coin-op conversion and a very successful one at that. Action is fast, smooth and furious. Sound is a cut (or rather a drop kick) above the usual 'Splat ooph' school of effects. And if you can resist the temptation to blow your top at the



first sign of danger, then there are six levels to fight your way through.

As with the arcade game, each level has a good backdrop but little villain variety. Most of your time is spent wandering down streets or corridors, fighting commandos who are about as much use in a fight as a nun in a brewery. Other opponents are a taller order, giving the Ninja plenty of opportunity to display all his fighting skills. Combat is fast and fairly accurate.

Ninja Warriors is considerably better



than the average punch 'em up. Slick movement and rapid loading mean the action is never more than a gunshot away. The action might be samey but it's undeniably tough.

GRAPHICS 72 ADDICTIVENESS 78 SOUND 78 EXECUTION 80 OVERALL 78

ROCK 'N' ROLL

Rainbow Arts/ST and Amiga £19.99

Sean: *Rock 'N' Roll* is one of those really weird games. It's superficially like *Marble Madness,* but only in as much as you control a ball which you must guide through 32 levels, for no apparent reason. It has more in common with something like *Gauntlet* but then again the connections are fairly tenuous. Where *Gauntlet* had you belting round the screen at a right old rate of knots, *Rock 'N' Roll* requires you to stop and think and work out loads of puzzles. Aaah – that's what it is – a puzzle game and it requires some hefty chunks of lateral thinking at various points. There are colour coded keys, money and diamonds to collect along the way and shops where speed-ups and other useful items can be purchased.

Unfortunately, most of the advancing is worked out by trial and error and it can be a real pain to reach a position where you know you can't go on because you need a certain object,

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SAFARI GUNS

Infogrames/ST & Amiga £19.99

Dunc: 'Concerned Liberal' games have a tendency to be a bit useless. Take *Greenpeace* for example... extremely 'right on' but also terminally crap. So are all ideologically sound games 'wet' and 'limp'? No. Here's one that isn't.

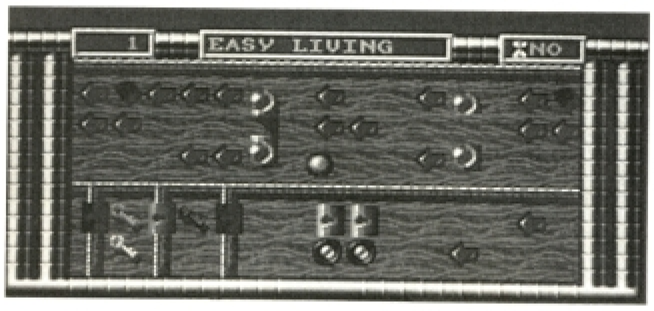
Safari Guns alerts you to the plight of wildlife: African wildlife in this case. But it's also a rather spanking game in its own right. Take *Operation Wolf*, turn it on its side, insert some outstandingly atmospheric graphics, loads of jungle animals, some 'nice people', some 'horrible people', some landrovers and planes and you're very nearly there. There are just two more important things to include – a rifle icon and a camera icon to switch between (*Safari Guns* is mouse controlled by the way).

The beautifully drawn African savanna scrolls sedately (with three level parallax) across the screen. Suddenly, from out of nowhere, a cheetah appears and dashes from one side to the other. Quickly, aim the mouse controlled crosshairs over it and shoot. Blimey, it's dead. (You weren't meant to do that actually – you were meant to select the camera icon first and take a picture of it.) Oh well, carry on with the camera now. A rhino – click. A lion – click. A long wait (no click). An ostrich and a giraffe – click, click. Oh no, there's an ivory hunter with a gun pointing at you – click. There, photographed him. Bang bang. Oh dear, you're dead: game over. Maybe you should have clicked on the rifle icon and shot him with a bullet instead of the camera. *(Yes, I think that would have been a better idea. Ed.)*

Anyway, the graphics (as I've already said) are a real masterpiece – there are a billion different animals to photograph and loads of 'nasty people' (ivory poachers for instance) to kill. The sounds are really good too and each level is stuffed full of different African scenery and wildlife. Now for a ginormous gripe. The addictiveness of *Safari Guns* is eaten into (and almost destroyed) by the disk accessing waits. (You have time to wash up more plates than Nannette Newman between some of the loads – and that's *not* a joke).

GRAPHICS 75	ADDICTIVENESS 87	OVERALL 75
SOUND 40	EXECUTION 80	





but can't get back to the place where the object you need lies. I also found the method of controlling the ball using the mouse awkward. These initial problems put me off *Rock 'N' Roll* at first, but I later found it a refreshing change from the normal style of game with good sound and colourful detailed graphics. Not a brilliant game but not a bad game by anybody's standards.

GRAPHICS 92	ADDICTIVENESS 60	OVERALL 75
SOUND 81	EXECUTION 70	

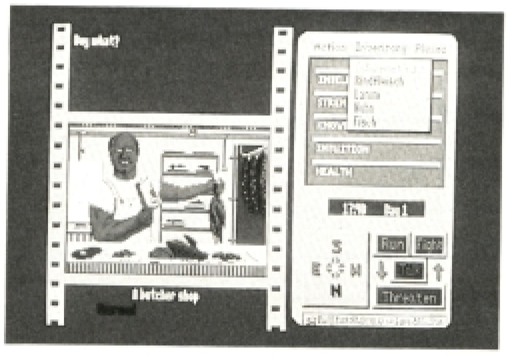
THE THIRD COURIER

Accolade/PC £24.99

Neil: Yes, I am Moondancer... the secret agent whose job it is to stop the Forces Of Evil. Three couriers carrying secret NATO documents have gone missing and using your skill and judgement, not to mention about 300,000,000 onscreen menus, you must find them and blow them away.

The story is like a movie, with the sprocket holes down the side of the screen in case you don't think the graphics are 'movie' enough. It's really a role- playing adventure game with pictures and the EGA graphics are not half bad. Movement around your world is governed by keys, N for north, S for south etc. And your attributes such as Intelligence, Strength, Intuition, Knowledge and Health are on screen at all times so you can see how you're doing. Your attributes alter as you gain experience so for example, your Intelligence grows when you solve problems and your Strength increases when you win combat rounds.

So, smart (if small) graphics, hard problems and a good feeling of atmosphere. Yes, the music is horrible but what can you expect from buzzer? Right now you've read this you must eat it. Want me to pass the salt?



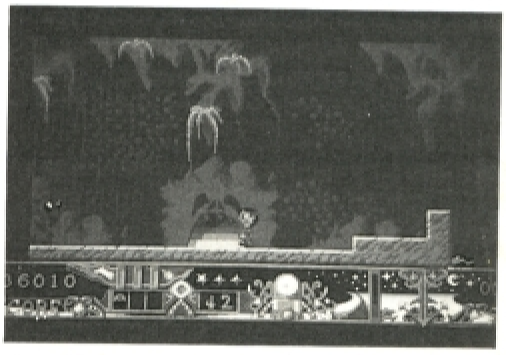
GRAPHICS 78	ADDICTIVENESS 45	OVERALL 81
SOUND 72	EXECUTION 71	

TWINWORLD

UbiSoft/ST & Amiga, price to be arranged

Jonathan: For some reason which eludes me, you're responsible for a small sideways scrolling landscape which is patrolled by a group of baddies. As well as wandering left and right, our hero can also go through doors (assuming he has the right keys) which lead into a sort of underground bit. Weapons can be found and used against the enemy.

The graphics tend towards the cutsey, but they're nicely done and complemented by suitable music and sound effects. Rather than be radically daring, *Twinworld* goes for a traditional formula and manages to be fun, if not exciting. I liked it. STOP



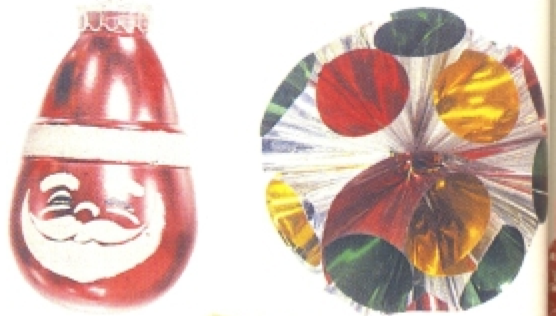
GRAPHICS 81	ADDICTIVENESS 69	OVERALL 78
SOUND 78	EXECUTION 80	



Christmas seems to be with us once more. Ho hum. Mind you, there's one good thing about this time of year, and that's receiving presents: but the trouble is that you also have to give them – even to people you hate. Not any more though. Simply follow our essential guide, and nobody will ever want a gift from you again. What a money-saving miracle...













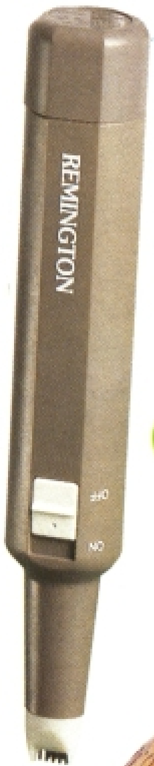




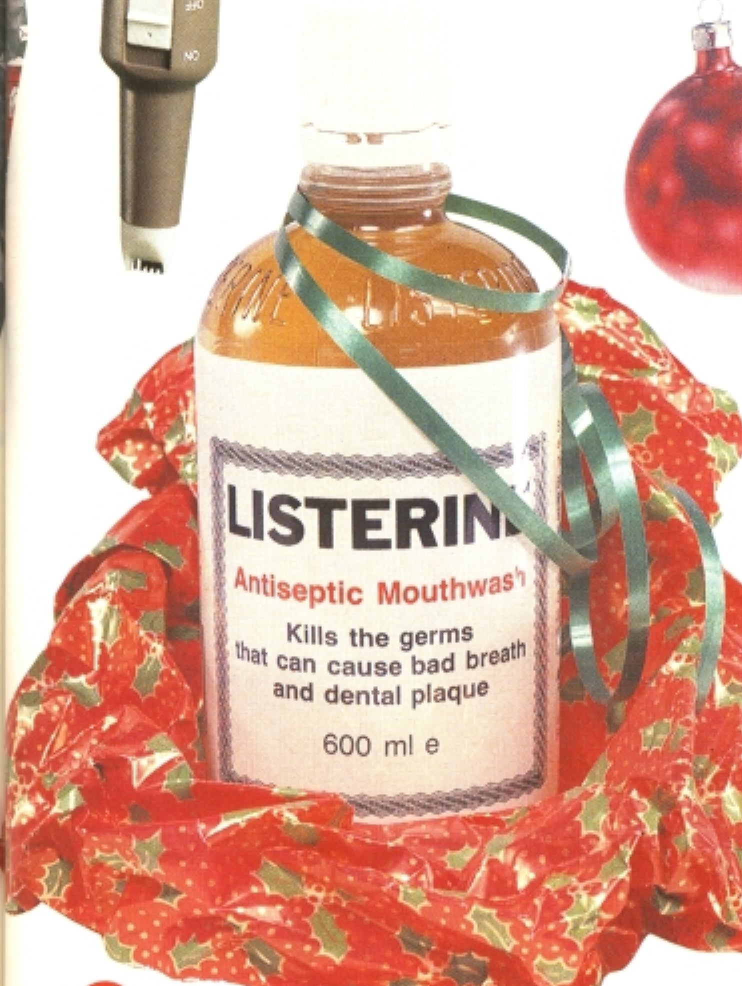
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9



10

1 THE UNDERPANTS
These underpants (or ones very much like them) can be picked up from any jumble sale for the princely sum of 10 pee (which is quite apt, as it looks as if '10' people have 'peed' in them). The lucky recipient can be the 11th.

2 THE JIGSAW
If you really hate someone a lot, what better to give them than this de-luxe 'Hampshire Cottage' jigsaw puzzle. Especially after you've made a tiny incision in the polythene bag and carefully removed (and destroyed) one of the pieces. How much will this 'wizard prank' cost to set up though? Five quid from The Reject Shop is the answer.

3 THE DOG JOBBIE
Aha! This is even better. It says it all really, doesn't it? These plaster 'canine stools' come from Preposterous Presents and cost only 99 pence apiece. Mind you, you could save yourself even this paltry sum by arming yourself with a long stick and going cag-hunting in your local park. Best to do it in cold weather though, or things can get messy.

4 THE NOTELETS
Aaaaaahhh! Lots of lovely little moggies and doggies. It's almost a criminal act to give these away, we know, but you should be able to bear it seeing as they only cost £1.50 (ours are from Oxford News, our local newsagent). Anyway, if the person you give them to is a *real* stinker, they'll soon start flowing back (in envelopes with stamps on).

5 THE 1990 BOWLS DIARY
A necessity for the most boring person you know (not that we're suggesting bowls is dull, but more fun *can* be had hanging around with Tony Soper watching a glacier move). Available for £3.99 from WH Smiths, the diary features a picture of John 'Bowling Machine' Ottoway – and there are Intercity routes included, to help you find the way to matches.

6 THE ALBUM
And what an album it is. A chance to 'get down and boogie' to 14 German accordian folk music tracks. Whoever gets this little gem is guaranteed to remain your enemy for life and it'll only cost you five pence (from most Oxfam shops).

7 THE 'PICTURE' CLOCK
Straight from the Tate or what? This visionary masterpiece on the theme of sex, power and, erm, horses, is not only an 'eye catching' painting in itself: it's a blimmin' clock as well – telling the time has never been so rewarding. The lucky person who gets this stunning gift won't forget you in a hurry. And it only costs 12 quid from Argos.

8 THE NASAL HAIR CLIPPERS
Do you know someone whose nostrils resemble an armpit from hell? Don't you think someone should tell them? Well here's your chance. This rocket-shaped device from Argos costs a mere £9.95 and can be stuffed up a nostril of any size – and even works in ears. It's best to wash it after use though (especially if the lucky recepient plans on sharing it).

9 THE LISTERINE
Nothing like a 'gentle hint' about somebody's personal hygiene to get them going. But why be subtle? Spell it out with an industrial sized bottle of Listerine. Available from Boots.

10 THE FOOT WARMER
Do you want to help someone look rather absurd? Then you could do far worse than shell out for one of these – a Cozee Comfort Foot Warmer. Like a preposterous 'giant padded sock' it can be attached, using its in-built flex and plug, to the National Grid. Hours and hours of ridiculous foot-warming antics await your enemy. By the way, you buy the things from Argos, for only £11.75.

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THE PRICE I$ RIGHT

It's time once again to come on down and spend all your shekels on the 16-bit budget sale of the century... (*er... wrong show. Ed.*)

BARBARIAN

Kixx/£9.99 ST, Amiga & PC

AMIGA

Sean: "What can we do to beef up what is basically yet another beat 'em up?" Palace probably asked themselves exactly this question when the game first appeared last year. "We could either make it a very slick, polished and playable product or enlist the help of some well endowed bimbo to sell it on sex(ist) appeal." Suprisingly, Palace did both.

Well, yes *Barbarian* is yet another variation on the ol' beat 'em up theme but it's so well presented, that you can practically forgive this aspect. The animation is smooth and clear while each individual move is big and easily distinguishable. There's also some excellent new moves in addition to the more usual 'sword to the middle, sword to the head' ones: stuff like headbuts and a brilliant forward roll which sends your opponent reeling all over the place.

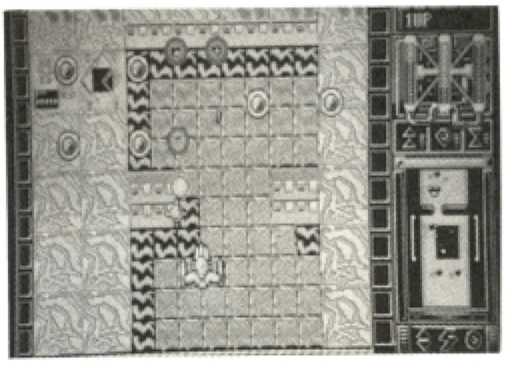
Background graphics are finely detailed but the actual figures, although big, look a little flat. Colourwise, they could almost have been designed on a Commy 64. Some of the manoeuvres, like the headbutt, look brilliant and result in a fair splatter of blood. Sound comprises of some rather nice crunchy hacking noises and attractive samples.



So although it's yet another beat 'em up, it looks good and is fun to play. If you're the sort who hankers after those bygone days of *Exploding Fist* on 8-bit machines, then you could do a lot worse than spend 10 quid on *Barbarian*.

GRAPHICS 78 ADDICTIVENESS 80
SOUND 76 EXECUTION 70
OVERALL 77

TRITON III



Wicked/£9.99 ST & Amiga

ST

Rich: If you've gone and left your brain behind playing *Carrier Command*, then *Triton III* could be just the thing for you – a shoot 'em up which requires the IQ of an Outer Mongolian Snuffle Rat to play.

Fly your little ship through six tough action (snore) packed scrolling levels, picking up extra weapons and bonuses along the way. Then kill a giant ship that is about to kill earth, before it kills you and the other 30, 000, 000, 000, 000, 000 people back home.

On a scale of 1 to 10, this scores about minus 20 on the originality front, seeing as it's all been done before. But apart from that, it's really rather good. It's very playable indeedy, the graphics are good and ignoring the sound ('cos it's crap), you can't really go wrong for £9.99 (unless you don't buy it, of course).

GRAPHICS 63 ADDICTIVENESS 75
SOUND 30 EXECUTION 52
OVERALL 73

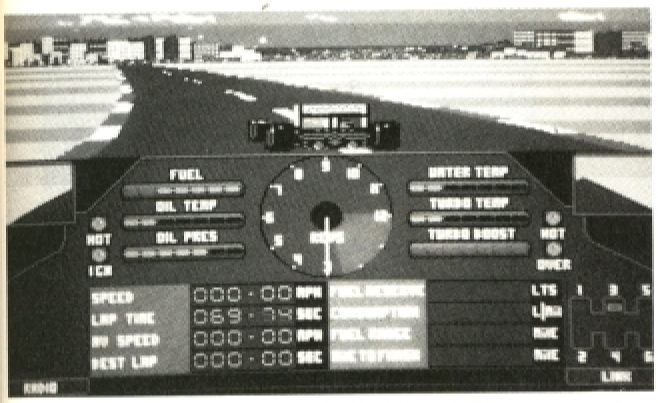
NIGEL MANSELL'S GRAND PRIX

React/£9.99 ST & Amiga

AMIGA

Sean: Based on Nigel Mansell's driving, I was expecting this game to crash on every race (boom boom) but fortunately it doesn't. Anyway, even someone with a brain the size of a gnat's gonad, could work out what this game is about so I won't bother with all the usual malarkey. Suffice it to say that's it's a racing game, though this time it's a little deeper than the average racer. It is in fact, a cross between an arcade game and a simulation.

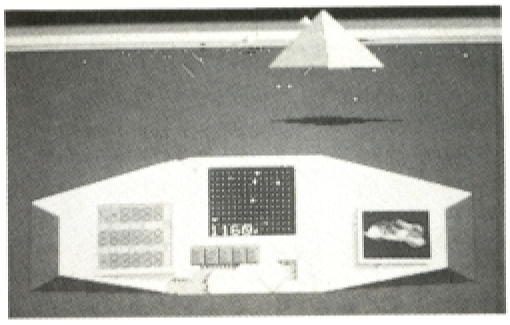
The racing takes place over a full grand prix season, with over 15 tracks to choose from. Before the driver can even take part in a race, he must qualify and to do this he has to beat the previous track record. Once driving, you must make full use of all six gears available. Fuel consumption, revs and so on also have to be taken into account. A turbo boost can be used but makes an incredibly large dent in the fuel gauge.



***N.M.G.P.* has got its faults, for example it's possible to get hit from behind by cars without you being able to take any avoiding action and this slows you down tremendously. It's also fairly primitive in the ol' graphics department, the only difference between any of the different circuits being the horizon scenery.**

It is a good game however and does provide a bit more of a challenge than the usual arcadey style racing games. The small width of track which allows you to just squeeze past any vehicle, provides a real racing challenge. The sound is good and at 10 quid, burning rubber isn't going to burn a hole in your pocket.

GRAPHICS 70 ADDICTIVENESS 86
SOUND 80 EXECUTION 80
OVERALL 80



TWYLYTE

Wicked/£9.99 ST & Amiga

ST

Rich: I don't think that 'odd' is quite a strong enough word to describe this game 'cos let me tell you, it's really, really weird! You're in a space ship which you fly through a 3D landscape at a billion miles per hour, avoiding large polyhedral objects (pyramids to you) and shooting down fighter craft along the way. I can't actually get very far but that really seems to be it.

Graphics are very fast and sound is good too. In fact the whole game would be good, if it wasn't so mind-numbingly samey. Perhaps I've missed something, but I found the whole thing rather tedious – it's not really worth playing for more than a few minutes, except to remind yourself how boring it is.

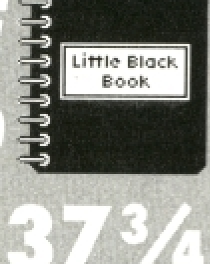
GRAPHICS 70 ADDICTIVENESS 19
SOUND 65 EXECUTION 62
OVERALL 32

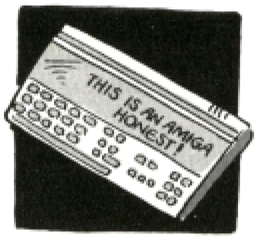
ADVENTURES

Ho ho ho. This month the Man With The Beard goes all festive on us and spills the beans about how he first got into computer gaming in...



THE SECRET (CHRISTMAS) DIARY OF *MIKE GERRARD* AGED 37¾





The First Day Of Christmas

On the first day of Christmas I hope my dad will give to me, a brand new Atari ST. At least, that's what I asked for, or Amiga or PC, not fussy really. Plus copy of *Dungeon Master, Dragon's Lair* or complete works of Infocom. Am suspicious as computer wrapped in brown paper and sellotape. Dad says he couldn't find any wrapping paper. Mum says they don't sell it at pub. Dad says only called in for a swift half. Ignore them both and rip off brown paper to reveal gleaming label saying "Amiga"! Am suspicious as computer doesn't look like mate's Amiga. Am more suspicious when peel "Amiga" label off and find other label underneath saying "Dragon 32". Dad says he bought it off bloke at pub. Says one computer just like another. Mum asks how much he paid. Dad mumbles. Sounds like "Fifteen quid". Decide not to say he was robbed. Ask where plug is. Dad says he'll take one off something else.



Second Day Of Christmas

Fed up with waiting. Take plug off telly. Realise need telly for computer. Take plug off Wayne's brand new record player. Couldn't stand the sound of Kylie Minogue again anyway. Ask mum when can expect real Amiga. Mum says if waiting on dad don't hold breath too long. Asks what's wrong with Dragon anyway. Start to tell her, but after 15 minutes she falls asleep. Wayne says who nicked his plug. Blame Sharon. Say she wanted it for her new Carmen rollers. Wayne sniggers. Get clout off mum, didn't realise she'd actually woken up. Go up to bed to dream about Amiga.



Third Day Of Christmas

Ask dad if man in pub sold him any software. Dad asks what's software, fishes through coat pocket, finds three cassettes. Two arcade games and one unlabelled. Say wanted adventure. Dad says he'll give me blinkin' adventure in a minute. Then goes to pub. Try to load tapes. Discover no plug on cassette player. Sounds suspiciously like Kylie Minogue up in Wayne's room. Take plug off toaster, snigger, snigger. Get clout off mum – didn't realise she'd woken up again.



Fourth Day Of Christmas

Finally succeed in loading unlabelled tape. Contains three programs in Basic. Good news is, one's an adventure! Load *Horror Mansion*. Screen says "See instructions on inlay". No inlay. Next screen says "Can you locate the mysterious Scroll of Zizzykak?" Discover Dragon doesn't even have lower case letters. Whatever type, comes out in capitals. Realise why it failed. Switch to ITV and see amazing Atari ST advert. Mum shouts from kitchen "Who's crying?" Say trod on cat. Kick computer.



Fifth Day Of Christmas

Make best of bad job and load *Horror Mansion* again. "You are outside a mysterious mansion." Type HELP. "I don't understand that," program says. Type GET SCROLL OF ZIZZYKAK. Program says "Congratulations, you have completed this adventure in 17 moves. Play again (Y/N)?" Press 'Y'. Program crashes. Swear, just as mum comes in from kitchen. Get clouted. Get told to make self useful. Go and watch that toast. Don't let it burn. Just fancy slice of toast, mum says. Take plug off washing machine and put it on toaster. Mum complains toast soggy.

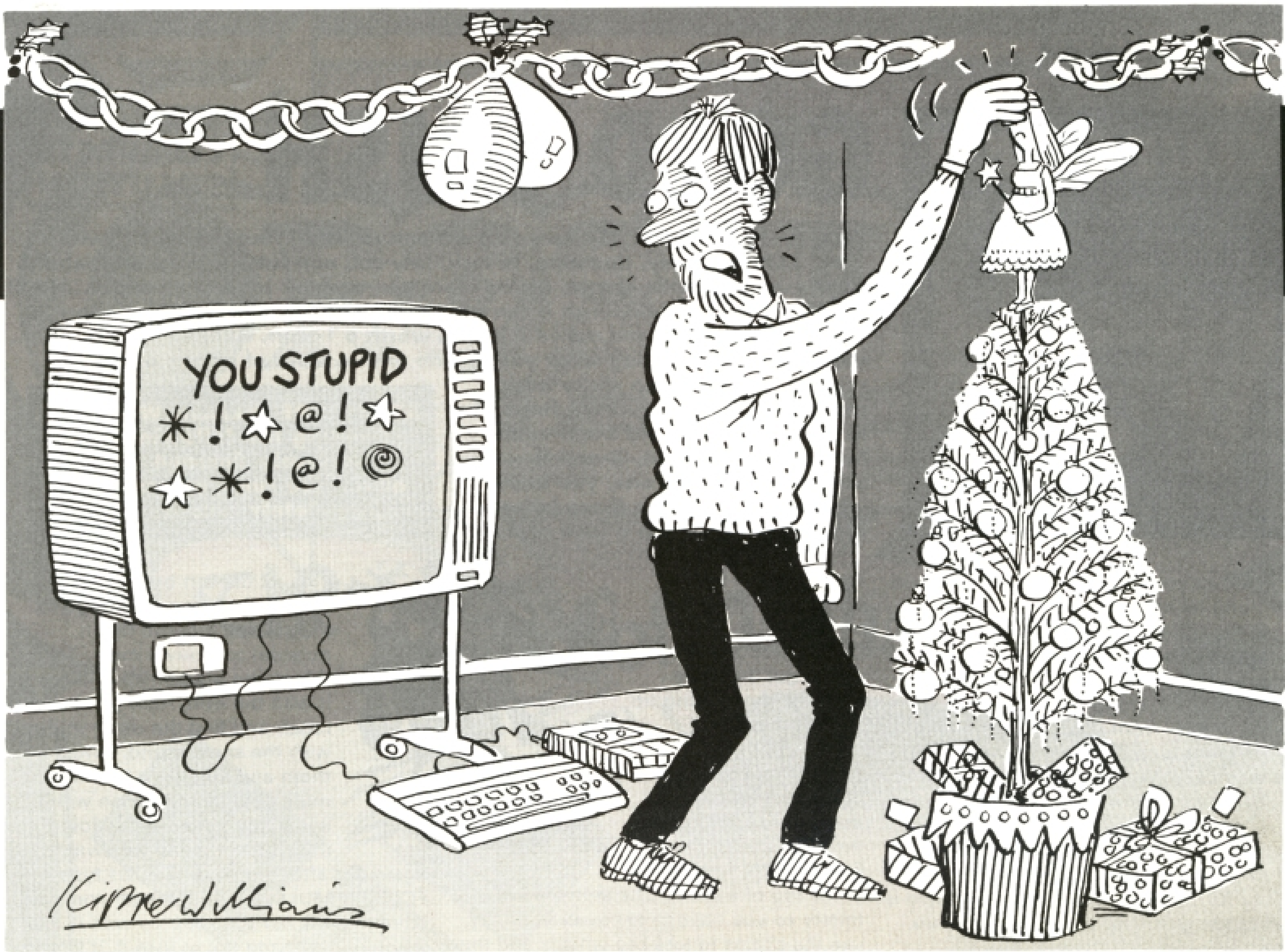


"Discover program has no sense of humour so decide to crash it by entering rude word. Press RETURN. Nothing happens. Screen locks up. Panic. How to get rid of rudest sentence in world before... yikes, mum comes in."



Sixth Day Of Christmas

Decide can write better adventure game than *Horror Mansion*. Realise no manual. Ask mum where manual is. She says ask dad. Ask mum where dad is. She says three guesses. Say will go down pub and ask him there. Mum says no I won't (rude word) go down pub. I will (rude word) stay here and play with that (even ruder word) computer that have been moaning about so much. Say (rude word) back. Get clouted.



ILLUSTRATIONS: KIPPER WILLIAMS



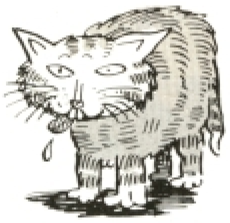
Seventh Day Of Christmas

Mum decides to do week's washing but says machine broken. Where's useless father? Decide to keep out of way. Load up *Horror Mansion* again while waiting for Amiga, ST, PC or something to turn up. "You are outside a mysterious mansion," it says. Try going NORTH, SOUTH, EAST and WEST. Program not understand any of these. Sharon throws frenzy about my room. Have to go and tidy it but put spider in her bed.



Eighth Day Of Christmas

Blek! Turkey sandwiches again. Get back to computer straight away. Try NORTH-EAST, NORTH-WEST, SOUTH-EAST, SOUTH-WEST, UP, DOWN, IN, OUT, HELP, INVENTORY, SCORE and (RUDE WORD). Program understands none of these except (RUDE WORD), which makes it crash. Start again. Pick nose while waiting for program to load from tape. Stop when finger comes out of ear. Game eventually starts. Decide to avoid rude words. Still outside flaming mansion. Try everything can think of. EXAMINE everything in sight, which is not much as seems to be nothing there but me and ruddy mansion. Sharon shouts about helping her with washing up. Forced to leave computer but hide all her electric rollers.



Ninth Day Of Christmas

Secretly feed turkey rissole to cat. Sneak off to play game. Try ENTER MANSION, GO IN MANSION, GO MANSION, OPEN MANSION, CLIMB MANSION, LOOK UP, LOOK DOWN, PUT LEFT ARM IN, LEFT ARM OUT, discover program has no sense of humour so decide to crash it by entering rude word. Type in rudest sentence can think of. Press RETURN. Nothing happens. Screen lock up. Hit every key on keyboard. Nothing happens. Panic. How to get rid of rudest sentence in world before... yikes, mum comes in. Switch TV off in nick of time. "Good," she says," now you can go into the kitchen and peel potatoes."



Tenth Day Of Christmas

Ask mum about Amiga. "How much does it cost?" she says. Already told her 18 times but tell her again. Also cost of ST and cost of PC while about it. Says can't afford it, as mortgage just gone up. Ask if can have advance on pocket money. Mum asks how many weeks? Decide to impress her and work it out on computer. Switch TV back on again. Mum read rudest sentence ever seen on our TV. Am sent to room with thick ear, no supper and promise of lecture from dad when back from pub. Definitely no chance of decent computer this side of 21st century.



Eleventh Day Of Christmas

Risk leaving bedroom again. Do washing up. Wash dog. Put plug on washing machine and say mended it. Have bath. Peel potatoes and do veg. Clean shoes. Tidy bedroom (placing back copies of *Big 'N' Bouncy* in new hiding place). Ask mum about getting decent computer. She say "Maybe... better ask dad." Sneak off to pub and march into bar. Find dad with arm round blonde from office. Dad go red. Girl go red. Ask about getting Amiga, ST or PC. Dad agree. Amazing. Promises to do it tomorrow soon as shops open, to do anything in fact.



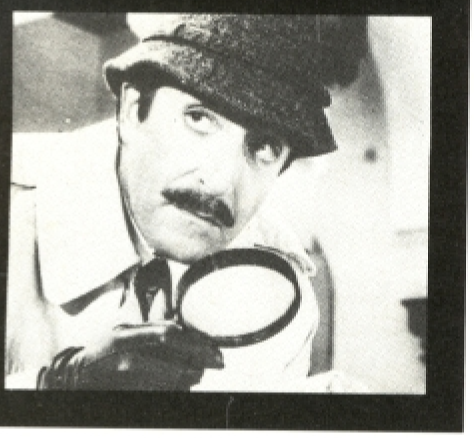
Twelfth Day Of Christmas

On the twelfth day of Christmas my dad gave to me, an ST, Amiga and an Amstrad PC. Think he's gone crackers. Mum thinks he's gone crackers. Wayne now asks for CD. Just gets clout. Dad say nothing too good for his clever son, know what he mean? Decide to go down to paper shop to find magazine dealing with all machines and with best adventure column. Buy ZERO, of course. But hide it inside copy of *Big 'N' Bouncy* as full of rude words and mum may not like it.





CLUES-EAU



GOLD RUSH

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Blimey O' Reilly! My very first adventure letter! But in keeping with ZERO's glossy, thrusting, hi-tech, low-cal, non-fattening ozone-friendly, custard-hostile image, it's no mere pen-and-ink job but a whizzy... FAX! Grant Forrest of Edinburgh is the culprit. He sent me a complete solution to Sierra's *Gold Rush*, and asked if it was worth a T-Shirt. It certainly was, so I sent him one. (Amazing what you can do with a piece of paper, a pair of scissors, a stapler, no sticky-back plastic and a ZERO sticker.) Hope you liked the personalised hand-made Mike Gerrard T-Shirt, Grant! If anyone else wants one, you know what to do, just keep those letters coming. But first, cop a load of this...

ADVENTURE HEALTH WARNING: Reading the following may seriously damage your adventure fun – unless you're completely crap anyway.

1 Go to your house, look at the album and take the picture of yourself. Close the roll-top desk to reveal a bank statement: read this and note your account number. Go to the bank and withdraw $200. Go to the post office to collect a letter from your brother telling you to meet him. The postmark tells you his whereabouts. Notice the strange holes in the letter – this will become important later. Note also the gold flake under the stamp: Jake has found gold! Go to your office and resign. At any time you can SELL HOUSE but make sure you've sold it before the gold rush is announced. Pick some flowers in the park and look between the floorboards at the gazebo.

2 On returning, sell your house to the agent who should be waiting outside. You can now choose to travel by boat round Cape Horn, through Panama or by stage coach. Stage is easier, provided you save regularly. The Panama route is very hard. If going by boat, go down to the pier and look at the sign in the warehouse to find where to buy your ticket. Buy it, board the boat and you're on your way. Put the flowers on your parents' grave. If going by stage, go to Stage Travel and buy a ticket. Go to Livery and show your ticket to the short, fat man. Climb on the coach and depart.



3 At the mining company, talk to the man in black. Give him all your money and go south. Talk to the man at the stable and say you want mature oxen (the Indians seem to take a fancy to mules and the young oxen!). Report back to the man and he'll tell you that you can set off on the trail once the plains have dried up. This is your next task, so go east and north and look at the plains. You'll find they're still muddy, but if you wait long enough you'll see that they start to change. This is when you should report back, and the whole camp will now set off on the trail to California. For extra points get the Bible from the man sitting up against the tree.

4 What happens on your journey is pure chance, except for the encounters. The first of these finds you at the top of a gulch. The animals are thirsty so you have to act quickly. Firstly, use the chains to lock the wheels and then release the wagon from the animals. You can then safely go on your way.

5 The second encounter finds you walking behind the wagon close to death! You have to get some sustenance quickly. Walk over to the disused wagon and get water from the barrel, then get some dried meat from inside the wagon. You can catch up with the wagon by walking off the screen westwards. You should now be able to reach Sutter's Fort.

6 There are only two places of interest at the fort: the graveyard and the stables. Go to the trading store and buy a pan with the gold coin. Now go to the graveyard and use the letter at your father's stone. You should be able to move the letter about the stone until a message appears giving you a substantial clue. Go and talk to the blacksmith and he will give you a branding iron from your brother. Now leave the fort and head west along the river, panning for gold as you go, though don't try it if another prospector is there.

7 Eventually you come to a town. Find the Green Pastures Hotel and ask the porter if you can rent room 11. He'll send you upstairs with a message. Give the message to the man and he will leave – now enter the room. You'll notice a cannon on the fireplace, so turn the wheel and crawl through the passage. You find yourself in a disused room. Get the magnet and string. Go over and open the window and a bird should fly in and go inside its cage. Use this bird to send a message to Jake. Now leave the hotel the same way you came, and if you've found enough gold go back towards the fort.



8 At the fort buy a shovel and a lantern, then go to the stables (not the ranch outside) and buy a mule. Take this to the blacksmith and brand it with the iron. Now go to the ranch and find the other mule with the same brand. Swop them and take your brother's mule outside – the man won't know any better. After doing this you can head westwards again but after a couple of miles type FOLLOW MULE. It then trots off and you have to work hard to keep up with it, but if you can manage not to lose it, it'll lead you to Jake's hut. If you do lose it, the co-ordinates you need are 27E, 7S.

9 Inside the hut, take the matches off the table and move the rug. This reveals a trapdoor but you can't open it yet. Go to the outhouse, light your lantern and... well, climb down the toilet. Now locate the red door, tie the string to the magnet, lower the magnet through the hole and get the key by pulling the string.

10 Next locate the ladder that abruptly stops at the top: there's a ledge to the left and slightly below here. It's now a matter of going down till you find Jake. He'll tell you that he's nearly struck it rich and will ask if you can help him. You'll see a shiny piece of gold in the rock to the right of Jake. Take the gold and use your pick at this spot, repeating the process until there's a hole big enough to climb through. So... climb through, and you've finished. Yee ha!

SO LONG, PARD'NERS

Beards may come and beards may go, but mine's as durable as my column. (*What? Ed.*) Until next month then, pard'ners – I expect to be swamped with your hints, tips, views, advice and anything else you wish to reveal (hem!). Write to me, The Man With The Beard (alias Inspector Clues-eau), Adventures, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE. So long.

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HOLD THE FRONT PAGE!

This is the bit of the mag where we celebrate 'The Local Newspaper', be it *The Huddersfield Echo, The Penge Express* or *The Aberdeen*, erm, *Angus* (?). They're all so boring, let's face it, and we asked you lot to send in some of the 'highlights' from these weekly (or daily) rags. Well, the response was so outstandingly good that we've printed some runners-up, as well as the winner.

Soft options at Raigmore

AT the October Meeting of Raigmore WRI Mrs Pat Harvey showed how to make cushion covers from small scraps of net and curtains.

Winners of the covered coathanger competition were: 1 Mrs O MacLean, 2 Mrs M MacIver.

The coveted **'Most Boring News Story In Great Britain This Month'** certificate has been won by Ross-Shire's *North Star*. They'll be receiving it in due course. And here are the runners-up...

● A stuffed weasel worth £25 was stolen from Deighton High School.

▲ *The Huddersfield Daily Examiner*

Call in at Yanworth

WEEKEND walkers out admiring the autumn colours in woodland around Chedworth will be able to drop in for a refreshing cuppa at Yanworth Village Hall during this month.

▲ *The Wilts & Glos Standard*

Patrol sign taken

A SCHOOL crossing patrol sign – otherwise known as a lollipop – has been taken from Beeston.

The sign – used on patrol near the Middle Street/Dovecote Lane junction – went missing between Thursday and Friday last week and is said to be worth £25.

▲ *West Notts & Derby Recorder*

Soles to soles?

A PROPOSAL to change the use of a shoe shop to a fish and chip restaurant in Stafford Street, Eccleshall is being considered by planning officials with Stafford Borough Council.

◀ *The Staffordshire Evening Sentinel*

● **Contributors:** Reg Tait, Ben Cowdall, Andy Singleton, Andrew Flanegan, Glyn Wade.

BLACK SHAPE

(The Alternative Letters Page)

Right. I want to get something straight. My name is Black Shape. Not Black Spot, not Black Blob, not Black Hole but BLACK SHAPE. If you write a letter to someone called Peter, you don't start by saying 'Dear Jonathan', do you? No, you rudddy well don't. So if you want me to bung your letter in this 'slot' you'd blinkin' well better get my bloomin' name right. Okay? Righto, let's get on then.

Dear Black Shape
Just a quick letter to say how wicked and brillo your magazine is. It was love at first sight. I saw it there underneath the *Sunday Sport* and I knew it was the only mag for me... *(snip.)*
Stephen Tweed, Worthing, Sussex.
● *The way some people automatically assume that a bit of unadulterated bum-licking will secure them a place in the best magazine the world has to offer. I don't know whatever next? Still, let that be a warning to the rest of you.*
Black Shape.

Dear Black Shape
Yesterday I went down to W.H. Smiths to have a butchers at the computer mags. I was just about to buy *Zzap* or *The One* when I noticed a new title which I hadn't ever seen before. Then I noticed it was only £1.50. Without any hesitation I rushed to the counter, pushed straight into the queue and bought it... *(snip.)*
Hammy Hamster, Hartlepool, Cleveland.
● *Sorry to cut your letter so short – actually I'm not sorry – but my old Nan was queuing in Hartlepool W.H. Smiths recently when, quote, "an extremely rude and pushy young man" (unquote) barged in front of her. It was obviously you. It fair put her off her stroke, I can tell you. She only had 188 items in her basket – and a carrier bag full of one, two and five pence pieces with which to pay for them. Surely you could have waited?* **Black Shape**.

Dear Black Shape
You always hear people complaining about how children haven't got respect left for anyone and that kind of thing. As these kids learn a lot from television, I'm not surprised so many of them grow into babbling psychopaths.

Take *Bagpuss* for example. In *Bagpuss*, a nine year old girl named Emily owns a shop of her own. Cleverly, so that she can afford to keep it open, she doesn't sell anything at all. No. Instead she goes out, finds things in the road, and gets her soft toys to put them in the window. What a briiliant concept for a childrens programme!!! There's even a walking book-end and a frog with a banjo who sings about flying porcupines. No one ever goes in the shop anyway – they've all been frightened off by Mad Emily.

By the way, why did you take the mick out of *Rainbow?* What's wrong about a perverse man in his late thirties living in a queer multi-coloured house with a six-foot bear called Bungle, a talking hippopotamus called George and a loud-mouthed dickhead called Zippy? And what about the 'neighbours', Rod, Jane and Freddy? They'll sing about anything. Imagine saying to them "Excuse me, this Wendy House is on fire. You three must evacuate it immediately". They'd burst into song with "Burning to death is very unsavoury, I hope Mister Fireman will come and save me."
By the way, the mag is mega.
James Butt, Wool, Dorset.
● *Have you ever seen* Button Moon?
Black Shape.

Dear Black Shape
The three-part competition you're running is too easy. If you're going to do competitions that rely on intelligence rather than knowledge, do not assume we are all idiots.

And how about a bit less of the puerile wit? Some of it is quite funny, but most of it is like reading the back of a cornflakes packet.
Mr M. Helliwell, Camberley, Surrey.
● *What's wrong with the backs of cornflakes packets? They've seen me happily through many a boiled egg. Oh, and regarding the compo, here are some extra-special directions just for you: "From the finishing point move 19 'clicks' in a south south easterly direction and find out which buses pass this point (from left to right). Don't get on the 173, 65 or the 88. Get on the other one and take a ride to its penultimate stop. Jot down the name of the third road to your left and remove three of the letters. You'll find it's an anagram of a very tiny village in Cambodia. Name the village."*
Black Shape.

Dear Black Shape
How dare you use my alias name in your fictional promo-letter. Yes, I am the real Beatmaster, and I think that as compensation you should not only send me a free T-shirt, but also give me a free plug in your magazine. Here goes. If any of your readers out there want some music mixes which, quite frankly, piss on Dave Whittaker's Megablast (can I say that in the mag?) *(Yes, you just about get away with Megablast. Ed.)*, then send two quid for each disk you want to the following address... *(snip.)*
Mike 'Beatmaster' Archer, Blackpool.
● *Oh dear. I ran out of room, so I had to cut the 'full postal address' bit. Still, I know you won't mind.*
Black Shape.

BUILDING TIPS

By Robert McAlpine Junior



Hello, me again. Time flies by when you're having fun out in the sun, with a spade, a pile of sand and a few other bits and pieces. And that's exactly what I've been doing this month – building patios: crazy paving patios to be precise, using only the very finest York Stone slabs. I'll give you some patio laying tips in a minute, but first, here are a few general tips from Paul Jeffries of Harrow...

1) When fitting new lighting in your house, test the circuit by sticking two fingers on the metal prongs of the light socket. If you feel a rather sharp jolt through your body the circuit is in working order (but you may not be).
2) To locate a gas leak, light a match in every room of the house until a loud explosion reveals the source of the escaping gas.
3) Put a wooden door in the rectangular hole in the front of the house. As well as stopping heat loss, it will deter burglars.

Tips one and two seem a trifle dangerous to me, but everyone has their own way of doing things, so well done Paul. However, if there was a suspected gas leak I personally would pop out to the local pet-shop and purchase several canaries. Then, having returned home I would lock each canary in a separate room of the house, and then book into a hotel for the night. On my return to the house in the morning, I would expect to find one of the birds dead – and thus the room with the leak would have been located. Simple really. Still, well done anyway.

Right, before I go here's a small tip for crazy paved patio construction (as promised).
Before concreting each slab into its final position, write the exact dimensions and weight of the stone (with an accurate diagram) on a piece of paper. Seal these pieces of paper in non bio-degradable 'envelopes', send them by registered post to yourself and once they've returned, place each one underneath the relevant slab. Now you can safely 'finish the job' – and if there is ever any problem getting the money from your contractor, you will be able to prove in a court of law that you laid each individual stone personally.

See you next month. Oh, and don't forget: building and demolition can be safe (and not lead to sleepless nights) – if you do things the Robert McAlpine Junior way. Don't hestitate to send all your building tips and queries to **Robert McAlpine** at the usual Yikes! address – you may win a prize.

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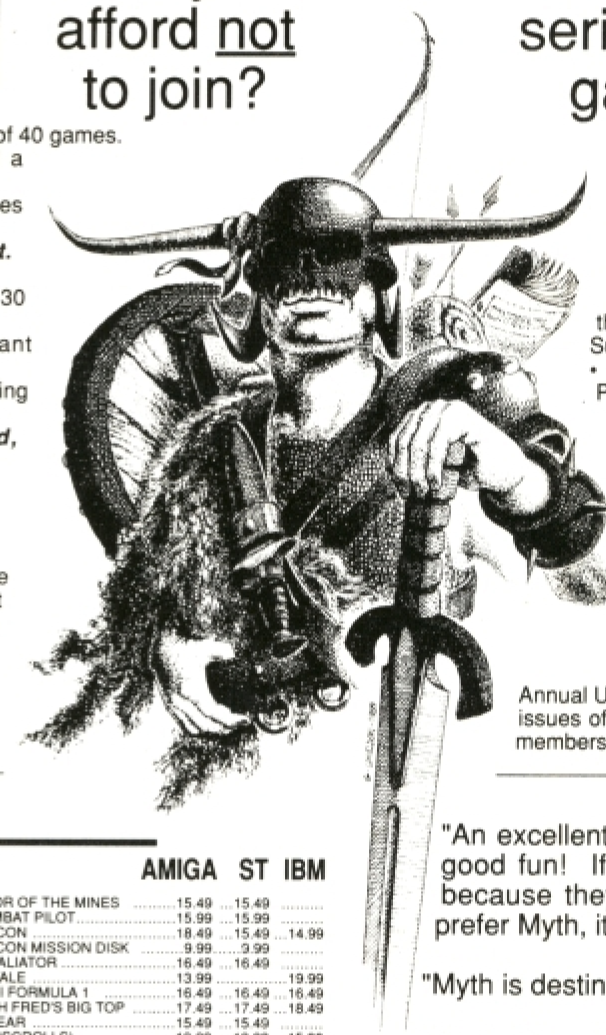
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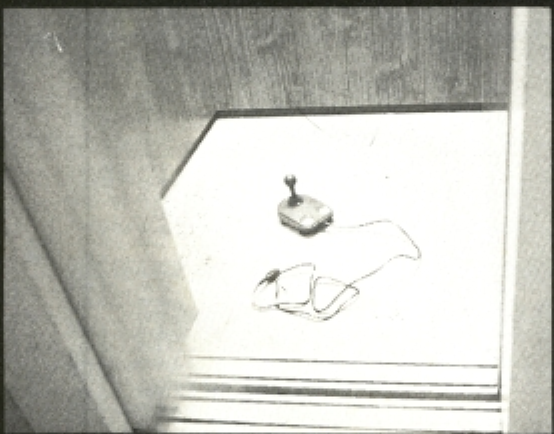
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HIGHEST JOYSTICK IN THE WORLD

Well, well, well. This seems to have stirred up a bit of a hornets' nest – unfortunately it's the most totally crap hornets' nest on the entire planet. Your efforts were (not to put too fine a point on it) *pathetic*. Here's a sample of what we received...

1) A photo of a Konix Speedking on top of a rabbit hutch in someone's back garden. (And the rabbit was one of the most moth eaten 'specimens' we've ever had the misfortune to clap our eyes on, by the way.)
2) A picture of a Quickjoy 5 'Superboard' perched precariously on somebody's head. (No doubt a 'cunning ruse' to get the face of the person in the photograph onto the pages of ZERO – an idea which failed abysmally).
3) A piccie of another Konix Speedking snapped mid-flight after having been hurled rather hard up into the air. The photo was crap though – a sort of tiny reddish blur against an overcast sky. (*It looked a bit like a UFO. Ed.*)

And there were more, but here's the one we've gone with. From Peter Ford of Norbiton, it shows a Powerplay Cruiser about to alight from a lift in a not particularly high 'skyscraper' (i.e. one with only four floors).



Surely someone can do better than that? Even if you live somewhere flat you couldn't really do worse. Please, pull your fingers out – and don't forget, a joystick can be 'popped into' a bag, so there's less of an excuse for not taking one with you wherever you go. Don't forget the camera though.



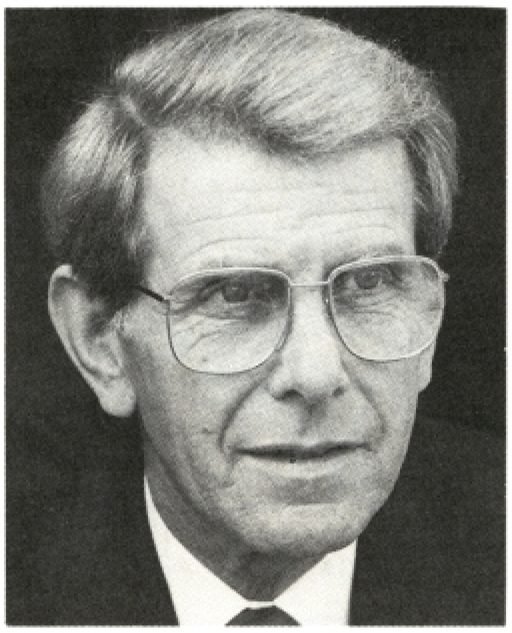
ASTRONOMY CORNER

By Professor Bernard Nebula

Professor Nebula is unable to bring you his column this month due to the fact that he is currently on board a top secret Nasa probe, 'en route' to the asteroid belt. He hopes to bring you, next month, an exclusive photograph of the Giant Space Spider (which is threatening to destroy the entire Solar System). Fingers crossed everybody, and may God be with you Bernard.

THE yikes! INTERVIEW

'BOB' HOLNESS



Every month Yikes! gets on the old dog and bone and dials a series of random numbers in the hope of contacting a celebrity. The first person we got through to was Mrs Mabel Poopdeck of Plaistow, so we tried again. And guess who we got this time? Only *'Bob' Holness of Blockbusters* fame. Corks. (Actually he was expecting our call – the rest of this intro has been a rather crap 'joke'). Here's what happened...

The Yikes! telephone earpiece: Ring ring, ring ring, ring ring, click...
Bob: Hello?
Yikes!: Erm, is that 'Bob' Holness?
Bob: Yes. Who's that?
Yikes!: It's Yikes! here. You know – the telephone interview thingy?.
Bob: Ah yes, of course. Fire away then.
Yikes!: Erm, crumbs. Okay then. When were you born?
Bob: Ho ho ho ho. You know what I usually say here, don't you? I say about 58 years ago – give or take a month.
Yikes!: Oh, so you're quite old then. Um what was school like for you back in those days? Was it all dingy classrooms and gruel for lunch?
Bob: Not at all, not at all. It was pretty much the same really, only then you studied for things called School Certificates. I originally went to a school in Herne Bay, but eventually won a scholarship to Ashford Grammar. Mind you, lessons were much the same as they are today, and I must add that I had a somewhat fragmented education.
Yikes!: Eh? Why's that then?
Bob: The Second World War.
Yikes!: Oh.
Bob: A lot of the masters were 'called up' into the army and whatnot, so we had a string of new teachers coming and going the whole time. And, for the first time ever, we even had mistresses.
Yikes!: Cor...
Bob: No, not that type – I mean *school* mistresses. Up until the war it had been a solely male occupation.
Yikes!: What, being a school mistress?
Bob: Do you want an interview or not?
Yikes!: Sorry...
Bob: What I'm saying is that there were only school *masters* before the war, but with most of them going off to fight, it gave women the chance to get involved in the education system. Anyway, my school was in what was called 'Bomb Alley'. All the planes that came over the Channel passed over us – there were continuous dog fights and bombing raids. I always say I spent half my

BOB'S ON THE HOTSPOT – IT'S GOLD RUN TIME...

Yikes!: You know the rules. You've got one minute to get from one side of the board to the other. Choose your start position, and we'll start the questions.
Bob: OTB.
Yikes!: Receptive and quick. Possibly a rugby player?
Bob: Um, On The Ball. FN.
Yikes!: Wrote *Human All Too Human* before going totally bonkers in 1889?
Bob: But that's a history question...
Yikes!: So? Anyway, it isn't – it's a literature one.
Bob: Oh. Um... er... oh, I don't know. ITP.
Yikes!: You get into this when you're feeling good?
Bob: In The... In The... er... In The Pink! RJAF, please.
Yikes!: Bungle the Bear's 'tuneful' neighbours?
Bob: Bungle the who? Erm... I don't know. Um, TAJ.
Yikes!: Fred Quimby's famous cartoon cat and mouse?
Bob: Tom And Jerry. RTW.
Yikes!: Yacht race that circumnavigates the globe?
Bob: Round The World. GOU.
Yikes!: According to James Brown, it's what you have to do before you can 'get on down'?
Bob: Get On Up *(like a sex machine. Ed.)* SITM.
Yikes!: Mike Tyson is quite capable of handing out one of these?
Bob: Um... Sock In The Mouth?
Yikes!: No, not 'sock'...
Bob: Um, um, um... Smack In The Mouth. SAS.
Yikes!: Words won't hurt you, but these probably will.
Bob: Sticks And Stones. Yahoo, I've done it.
Yikes!: Yes. But I'm afraid you can't have a prize because your poem was so useless. Bye bye.

school career on top of my desk and half underneath it.

"I spent half of my school career under the desk."

Yikes!: Weird! So there wasn't an air-raid shelter at this school then ?

Bob: Of course there was – we spent a lot of time down there as well. Oh, and there were the Doodlebugs. The Spitfires and Meteors used to spin them over by knocking them with their wing tips – making the bombs crash onto the Kent countryside. It was fantastic. We kids used to spend all our time collecting the shrapnel.

Yikes!: Lordy. What was your first job?

Bob: A compositer for a firm of printers. I had to do National Service shortly after starting that as a Radar Operator in the RAF for two and a half years. Then I went back to printing. Then in the early 1950s I moved to South Africa, where I...

Yikes!: Yikes! South Africa?

Bob: Yes, South Africa.

Yikes!: So what do you think about the state of play there, then?

Bob: Oh, I think that the whole thing is appalling. It saddens me greatly.

Yikes!: So are you for or against sanctions?

Bob: Well, that's a very big question. Um. Well, I really do feel that if sanctions were to be imposed it would hurt *both* sides – the black population *and* the government. Selective sanctions may be a good idea, but I don't know if the whole situation can be salvaged without any fighting.

Yikes: Your poems are a bit crap actually, Bob.

Yikes!: Yes. We think there's going to be a little bit of 'trub'. So, anyway, you moved to South Africa...

Bob: Yes, and I was going to continue in printing but ended up joining the Intimate Theatre in Durban, which gave me my break as an actor. This led to me getting a job with the South African Broadcasting Company, as an actor, DJ and Newscaster. Then in 1961 I moved back to England and got a job with Granada TV, and later, moved on.

Yikes!: You've got a programme on the BBC World Service called *Anything Goes*, and at the beginning you read out a small poem which ends with the words 'Anything Goes'. Do you write these yourself?

Bob: Yes.

Yikes!: Oh. They're a bit crap actually.

Bob: Yes. Ha ha ha *(a bit stroppily)*.

Yikes!: Can you write one especially for us? One with the word 'orange' at the end of one of the lines?

Bob: Yes. Alright. I'll have to think for a minute. *(About 400,000 million trillion years pass)*. Ah – here's one...

I remember the day I appeared in a play
Called *The Happiest Days Of Your Life*,
For the scene was a school, where they all played the fool,
Though it did show their trouble and strife.
But one member of staff (always good for a laugh)
Used to spend her time touching her toes,
Then this mistress Miss Goringe who was sucking an orange,
Would listen to *Anything Goes!*

Yikes!: Blimey. You are quite crap at poems, aren't you? Um, when people approach you they must say things like 'Can I have a P please Bob?'. How annoying is this?

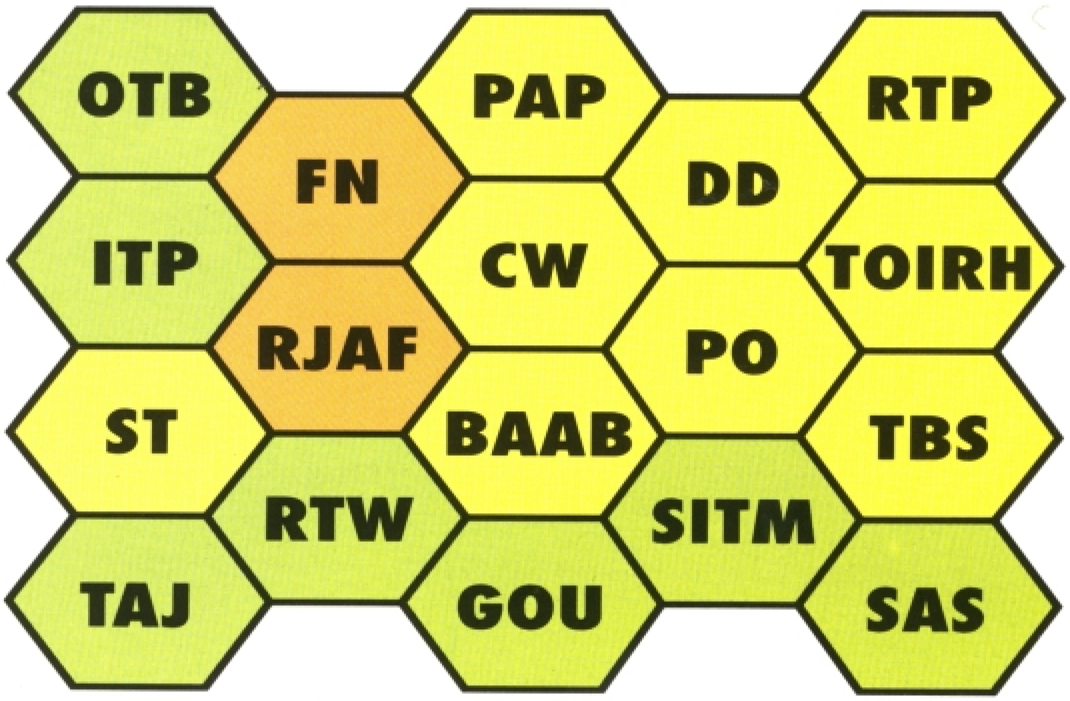
Bob: Oh, it's not at all annoying. You come to expect it. I was in The Strand *(a bit of London. Ed.)* the other day, and a lorry driver blocked two lanes of traffic purely so he could lean out of his window and say 'I'll have a P please Bob'.

Yikes!: Can we have a B please Bob?

Bob: Ho ho ho *(a bit stroppily)*.

Yikes!: Okay. That's nearly it. Do you mind doing a Gold Run for us before you go? We've made up our own questions and everything.

Bob: Okay then. Fire away.

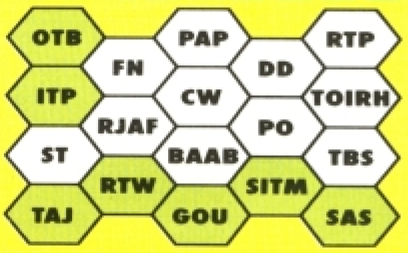


BOB'S ROUTE   BOB'S FAUX PAS

THE YIKES!/BLOCKBUSTERS COMPO

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Well, Bob got seven right. So how well will you do with what's left on the board? Obviously you've got to start with ST as it's the only one remaining in column one, but as long as you avoid the other ones Bob got correct (the bottom line basically) it's up to you which route you take. You can refer back to the big Gold Run board on the left, and there's a titchy one on the coupon – so fill in the hexagons you're answering with red ink (we've filled Bob's in already). Just jot down the answers to the relevant questions in the space we've left for them, then send the coupon to **I'm More Like Bamber Gascoigne than 'Bob' Compo, ZERO, 14 Rathbone Place, London W1P 1DE**.



ST: Rebel MC song in which he reckons he's 'a bit hard on the road'.

FN: Wrote *Human All Too Human* before going totally bonkers in 1889.

RJAF: Bungle the Bear's 'tuneful' neighbours.

PAP: Two extremely disgusting little pigs.

CW: Something George Formby might do while up a ladder.

BAAB: As ill sighted as a winged mammal?

DD: You won't be very clever to be hit by this particular bullet.

PO: "Go away", in no uncertain terms.

RTP: He's a copper on *Brookside*.

TOIRH: You'll be unlikely to get it.

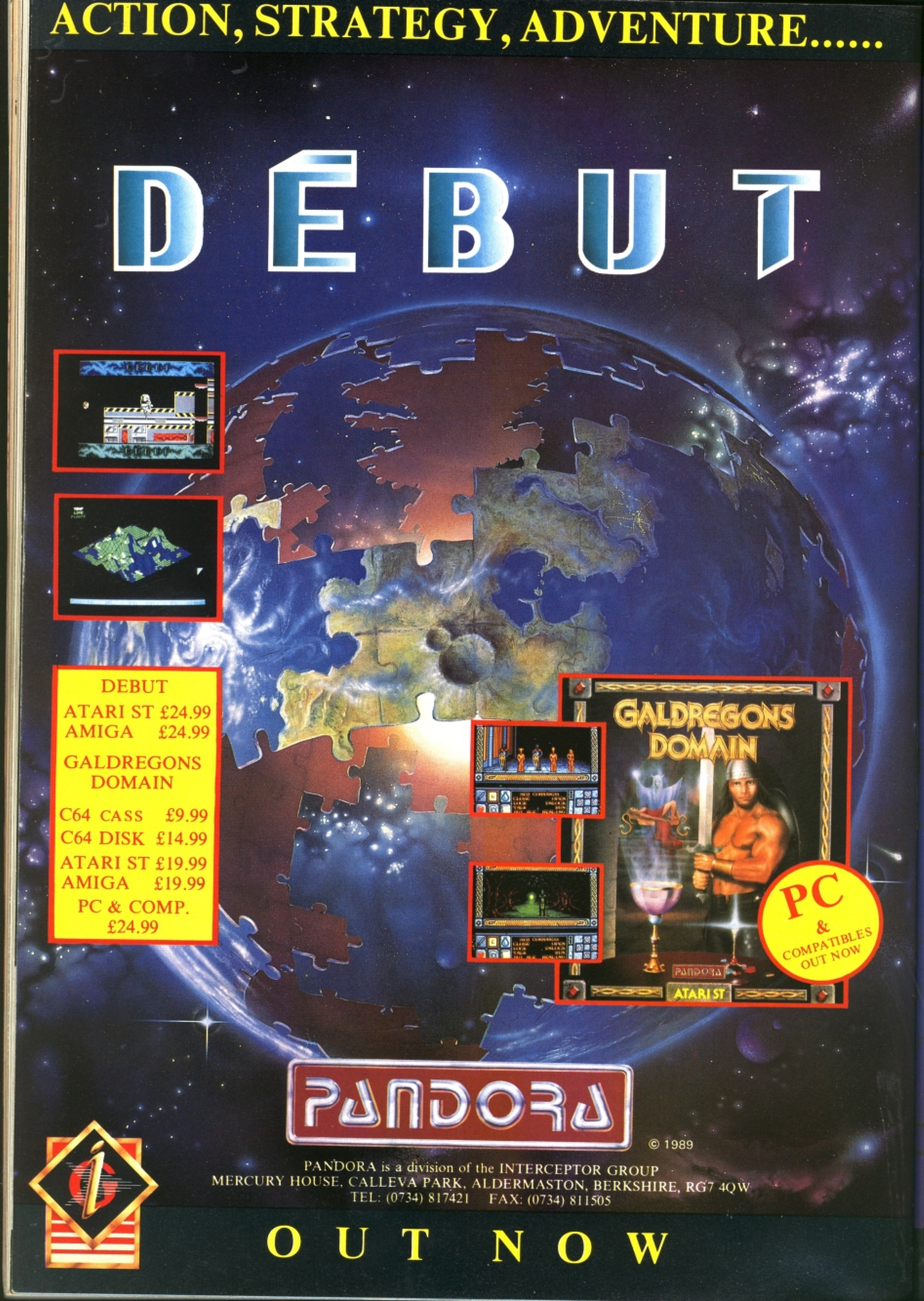
TBS: Boomerang shaped fruit between two pieces of bread (twice).

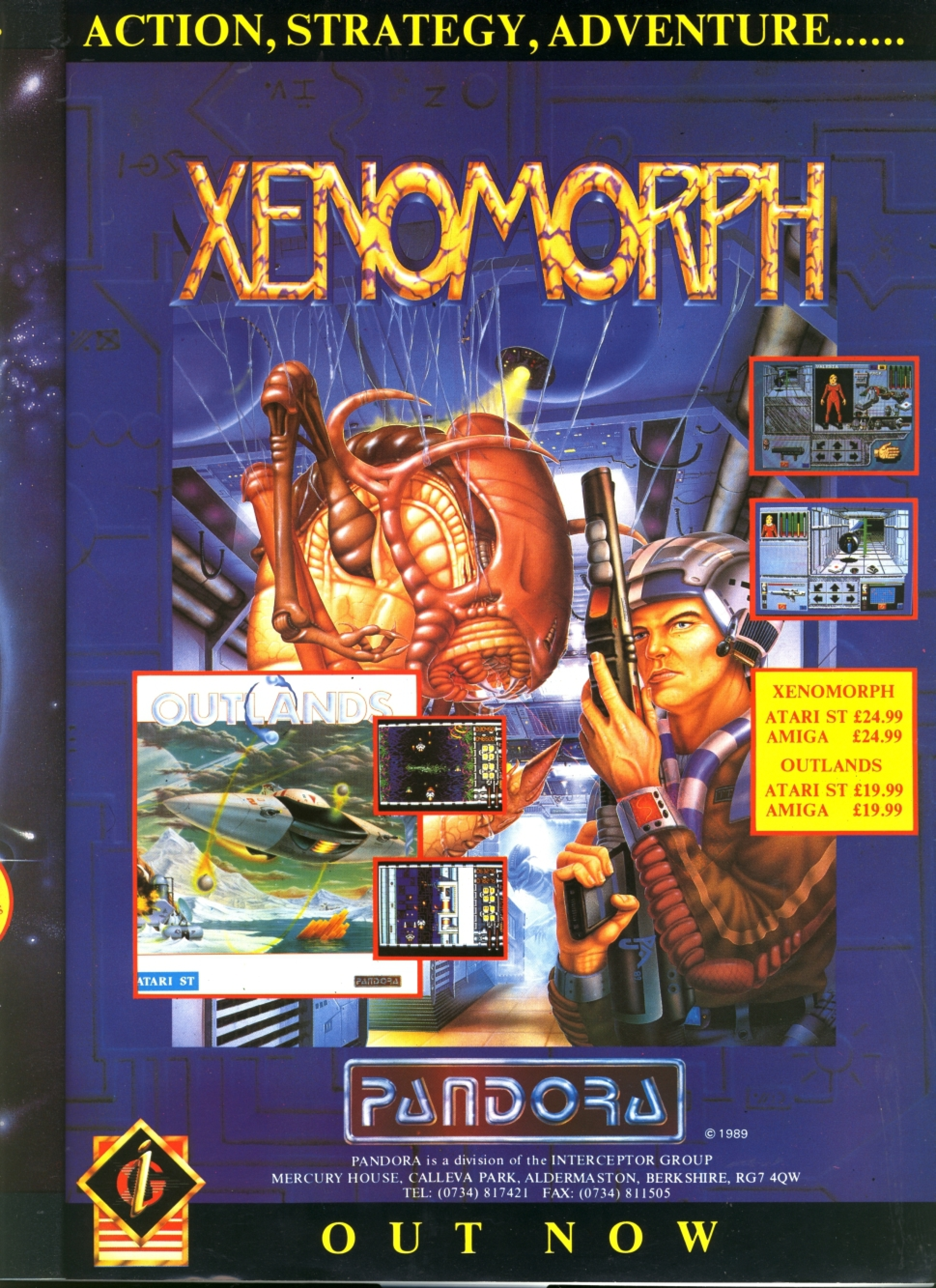
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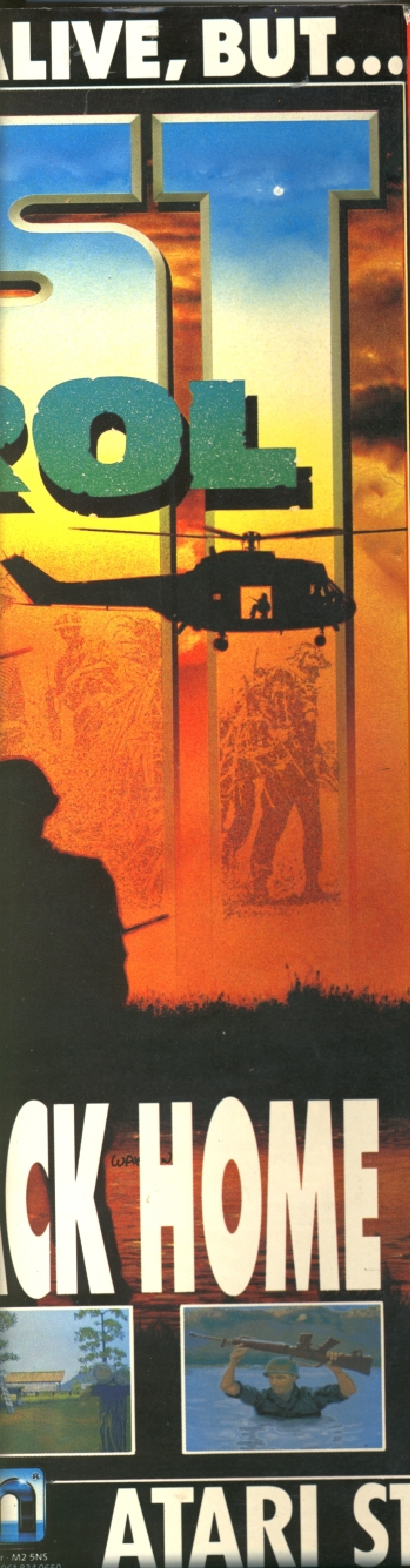
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